A STUDY OF THE PROFOUND PATH OF GCOD:
THE MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHIST MEDITATION TRADITION
OF TIBET'S GREAT WOMAN SAINT MACHIG LABDRON

by

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PREFACE

This dissertation explores the Tibetan Mahāyāna Buddhist meditation tradition known as gCod (pronounced "Chö") or 'Cutting', developed by the eleventh century Tibetan woman yoginī and philosopher, Machig Labdron.

This great scholar and yoginī taught the special meditation and philosophic system, gCod, in Tibet, where it was received at that time with great enthusiasm on the part of lay and monastic Tibetans and even Indians. Even today the gCod is among the greatest treasures which the Tibetan refugees brought with them when fleeing Tibet after the Chinese invasion in 1959, and is among the most popularly received Tibetan Buddhist teachings being taught today.

Just as Machig Labdron's name and fame spread throughout Tibet and to all the different schools of Tibetan Buddhism, so too are her teachings and stories of her outstanding lifestyle and deeds enjoying great popularity among western and Tibetan scholars and contemporary students of Tibetan Buddhism.

A seemingly countless number of texts on the gCod practice have been written and continue to be written by Tibetan scholars and followers of gCod, and European scholars have shown great interest and curiosity about the gCod

since the early days of Tibetology, if at first in a somewhat superficial and fantastic way.

Western scholars, especially in the past ten years, have shown a deeper understanding of and interest in the gCod as a subject which deserves thorough investigation. What is presented in this dissertation is only a small, but we believe a relevant and beneficial portion of primary resource material toward a deeper understanding of the gCod tradition.

It has been our intention to gather information about the texts available on the gCod practice, in an attempt to explain the ritual itself and the meaning it has for Tibetan scholars and practitioners, so that western scholars may have a look at the ritual from the inside out, instead of from only the other way around.

The gCod system is a union of both Sūtra and Tantra, and as such a multivalent approach to the subject has been necessary, for, as scholars such as Edward Conze[1] have noted, tantric traditions have regularly been misrepresented by Western scholars, whose purely philological approach to the texts has proven unsatisfactory due to the highly symbolic and enigmatic style

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[1]Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1962, p. 270.

of the material.

Therefore my research methods have been largely phenomenological, and have involved both textual work and active fieldwork, including reading and translating the Tibetan texts together with Tibetan scholars of the gCod tradition; observing and recording gCod rituals performed in various contexts and for various purposes, and consulting Tibetan scholars of gCod about both the oral tradition and the textual tradition regarding the gCod meditation system, written by great Tibetan scholars.

Our purpose in undertaking this dissertation has been to find out what the gCod system was meant to be when it was developed by Machig Labdron in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and to determine if and how it has changed and developed to the present time. As the subject is so vast and complex, and there are literally hundreds of gCod texts available for study, we have focussed primarily on a discussion of the gCod meditation ritual.

The ritual itself is imbued with rich symbolism, utilizes powerful imagery and makes challenging demands on the meditator's capacity for compassionate love and wisdom. The meditator in a sense guides her/himself through the entire meditation with singing, accompanying herself with the rhythmic patterns of the *ḍamaru* (a kind of drum similar to the Indian drum *chang-te'u*). All the

elements of the ritual performance have a particular significance -- the voice is said to be the expression of the yoginī's gift of the body, speech and mind. The *ḍamaru* makes the sound of the wisdom of the union of compassion and emptiness, and the thighbone trumpet serves to remind the yoginī of impermanence and dependent arising. The meditation involves visualizing that one's own body is transformed into food and all desired objects for other beings to enjoy. At the beginning of the ritual, the yoginī sings a verse recalling the Buddha's previous lives as Bodhisattva, during which times he repeatedly gave his life and services for the sake of others. The gCod yoginī tries to follow in the example of the Buddha through the practice of the meditative ritual.

In an effort to come to a deeper understanding of this complex and engaging ritual and of the gCod system as a whole, in Part Two we have translated Machig's text entitled *The Eight Extraordinary Chapters*, which was selected for translation because it elucidates all the basic features and requirements of the gCod practice. The Introduction preceding the translation also gives a list of texts attributed to Machig that we have constructed based on references found in several different Tibetan sources.

Part Two also contains a translation of Chapter Five of the famous text referred to as the *Namshā Chenmo*, its full title being *Phungpo gzan skyur gyi*

rnam bshad gCod kyi don gsal which gives detailed commentary on the gCod meditation, ascribed to Machig Labdron.

It has also been the aim of this dissertation to survey how the gCod has developed through the centuries to contemporary times, and therefore in Part Three translations of several more recent texts are presented in the chronological order in which they were written.

1. the Commentary on the gCod by Tsongkhapa,

2. the manual for practice of the Ensapa Whispered Lineage by Panchen Lobsang Chokyi Gyalstan

3. a concise recitation text by Thu'kwan Lobsang Chokyi Nyima

4. a one-page gCod text by Dharmabhadra

5. gCod offering (*tshogs*) text by Zong Rinpoche

In Part Three the translations themselves are prefaced by a section on the lineages of the gCod tradition.

In the Introduction we have provided a brief overview of the system of gCod, including:

1. Description of the gCod system in terms of its name, historical background and founder

2. The gCod philosophy and meditation system

3. The prophesies about and birth of Machig Labdron

4. Her teachers, students, and family

5. The ritual itself, including the ritual objects, the place for the ritual, the type of person to practice the ritual, and various results of the practice.

At this place, I would like to express my gratitude to the Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, originally of Sera Je Monastery and Gyumed Tantra College, who resides in Switzerland and teaches the Sūtra and Tantra widely throughout Europe. He has generously shared his great knowledge of the Sūtras and Tantras, and of gCod, as well as his extensive collection of gCod texts during my fieldwork in Switzerland, and allowed me to record many different gCod rituals.

I would like to thank my advisor the Venerable Professor Geshe Lhundup Sopa Rinpoche for his constant encouragement and erudite scholarly advice, and for enabling me to make an extended and timely visit to Los Angeles in 1983 where I was able to pursue indepth studies with the Venerable Zong Rinpoche.

I would also like to acknowledge my great debt of gratitude to the late Venerable Zong Rinpoche of Ganden Shartse Monastery, a great Tibetan scholar and master of gCod. Under his guidance and inspiration, I received my first real glimpse into the gCod practice in 1980, in Zong Labrang of Ganden Shartse

Monastery, in the Tibetan refugee settement in Mundgod, Karnataka State, India. He recounted to me the basic fundamentals of gCod, told me many lively and colorful stories about gCod practitioners, allowed me to attend a performance of a gCod ritual, gave me a copy of the famous recitation manual *sGyu Lus tshogs su ngo ba* (Dedicating the Illusory Body as Offerings)[1] and loaned me several other texts from his private collection. Again in 1983 during his visit to USA I was able to record the various melodies and ways to play the ritual instruments used in the gCod practice.

My thanks also to Lodro Tulku of the Tibet Insitute, Rikon, Switzerland, who has been most helpful throughout the research period, offering valuable assistance with historical issues and translation problems.

I am grateful to Venerable Geshe Tsultrim Gyaltsen and Thubten Dhargye Ling in Los Angeles for graciously allowing me to spend time interviewing and recording the Venerable master Zong Rinpoche during his stay in California.

I would also like to thank the Fulbright Fellowship Committee and Title VI, who supported my fieldwork during 1984-1985, the Tibet Institut, Rikon Switzerland and Ms. Rosemarie Kung, for facilitating my opportunities for

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[1]Phabongkha bde chen snying po, *sgyu lus tshogs su sngo ba.*

research in Switzerland.

I am grateful to Dr. Martin Kalff, Zollikon, Switzerland, for his most helpful comments and insights, and to all those friends and family who have helped me in Switzerland and in the USA through private grants and support needed to complete this work. I would like to especially thank my sister, Susan, for her editing, proofreading, help with preparing the manuscript, and above all her constant encouragement.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Peter Lindegger of Tibet Institut, Rikon, Switzerland; Mrs. C. Gelpke, Mrs. V. Hackel, Mr. M. Kasper, Mrs. D. Rich, Yvonne Rand, Mr. William Sterling and The Callipeplon Society for their generous support of and interest in this work.

1. Description of the gCod Tradition in terms of its Name, Classification and Historical Background

1.1. The Definition of the name 'gCod'

The Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophic and meditation tradition known as gCod, (pronounced chö) or Cutting, (or gCod-yul, that which is to be cut) is also widely referred to as the *Zabmo bdud gyi gCod yul* or the *Profound (Path) of Cutting the Demons*, which refers to cutting off the demons of *self-grasping*, i.e. one's grasping to the erroneous conception of an inherently existent "I" (*bdag-'dzin*) and one's *self-cherishing* (*rang gces 'dzin*).

The gCod system is also referred to as *spyod*[1], meaning practice (also pronounced chö) or *spyod yul* (that which is to be practiced), referring to the practices of the Method and Wisdom in which a follower of the gCod tradition engages to develop the two Bodhicittas (Conventional and Ultimate).[2]

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[1]George Roerich, transl, *The Blue Annals*, by 'gos Lo tsa ba, New Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, rpt. 1971, p. 980.

[2]According to the Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche (public discourse on the gCod Practice, Switzerland, 1990), the practice of gCod is the means of increasing the two Bodhicittas.

Conventional Bodhicitta is the mind having has the aspiration to attain Buddhahood for the purpose of all living beings, and for that purpose, engaging in Giving and the other Perfections. At the time of the gCod, one trains in the Conventional Bodhicitta by first generating the strong aspiration to attain enlightenment for the sake of all living beings, and then, practices giving, by means of giving one's own body.

We find the practice referred to as *spyod* again under the name the *Lam Zab mo thabs shes kyi spyod yul, The Profound Path the Object of Practice (spyod) of Method and Wisdom*[1].

Machig Labdron also refers to these two terms: *gCod*, (cutting) and *spyod*, (practice) in *The Uncommon Eight Chapters*, when she states:

gang byung gi snang wa thad kar *gCod* ching

spyod pa chi thod thod du **spyad** dgos pas

"So whatever appearances arise, one should *cut* (*gCod*) them off directly (giving up anything which is an obstacle to the Six Perfections) and should *practice* the activities (spyodpa) which are meritorious (i.e. the Six Perfections.)"[2]

The tradition is also known as the *pha rol tu phyin pa'i bdud kyi gCod*

The Ultimate Bodhicitta is the mind which meditates on the wisdom of Emptiness of all phenomena and one's conventional mind of Bodhicitta as inseparable.

[1]See Geshe Lobsang Donden's text *Lam zab mo thabs shes kyi spyod yul stan thog gcog tu len tshul 'khrid chog dgra las rnam par rGyal mtshan* in *gCod tshogs, The Collected gCod Teachings of the dge-lugs-pa Tradition,* Dharmasala, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1976, pp. 191-251.

[2]*The Eight Extraordinary Chapters* in *gDams Ngag mDzod*, ed. by Kon-sprul blo-gros mtha'yas and newly ed. by Dingo Chhentse Rinpoche, 18 volumes, Paro:Bhutan, Lama Ngodrup and Sherap Drimey, vol. 14, p. 153.

yul or the *Prajñāpāramitā (Path of) Cutting the Demons*, referring to its basis in the Prajñāpāramitā philosophy[1].

It is also sometimes referred to as the *phyag gya chen po'i gCod*, or *gCod of the Māhamudrā*, referring to its connections with the Māhamudrā teachings, as we will see in following sections.[2]

1.2. Historical Background

Although the name gCod was designated to this system of meditation in Tibet in the second half of the 11th and first half of the 12th century by the female yoginī and scholar, Machig Labdron (1055-1154),[3] the subject and

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[1]It is said that Machig developed the gCod teachings based on her understanding of the Chapter on the Demons (Māras) from the Prajñāpāramitā texts. *Phung po gzan skyur gyi rnam gshad gCod kyi don gsal* (sometimes written *Phung po gzan sgyur gyi rnam bshad gCod kyi don gsal*), in *gCod gyi Chos skor*, New Delhi, Tibet House, 1974, p. 33. Hereafter referred to as *Namshā Chenmo*.

[2]*Namshā Chenmo*, p. 106.

[3]Machig's birth is given by Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen as being in the first Rabjung, the year of the water horse, *Zab Don snyan brgyud kyi gCod gzhung zab mo gcod kyi man ngag blo gros mig 'byed* in *The Collected Works of dbal-man dkon-mchog-rGyal-mtshan*, ed. by Gyaltsan Gelek Namgyal, Vol. 3, New Delhi, 1974, p. 469. Hereafter referred to as *gCod Commentary*.

essence of the gCod dates back to Buddha Śākyamuni.[1] As the historical development of the gCod tradition is available in various translations from the Tibetan[2], as well as in articles by Gyatso and others[3], we will not go into detail here in this matter. But, for the purposes of clarity we will set forth a brief exposition of the historical basis of the gCod tradition.

Machig Labdron systemized the meditation ritual and related practices and gave them the name gCod. She was very well known in both Tibet and India. The practice has thrived from her time to the present, and literally hundreds of texts were composed and continue to be composed about this meditation tradition. It is a complex system, in its external rituals and internal contemplations, as well as in its use of symbols and their meaning, and in terms of its funtion in society.

Although Machig Labdron is responsible for systematizing the gCod and for propagating it widely, it is clear that there was the *meaning* of gCod in India

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[1]See Janet Gyatso's article, "Historical Development of the gCod Tradition",in *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization*, ed. by Barbara Aziz and Matthew Kapstein, New Delhi, Manohar, 1985, pp. 320 - 341.

[2]Thukhwan, Chapter on *Zhi byed* in *grub mtha'*, Shinhva, Kun su'u mi rigs ddpe skrun khang, 1984; 'gos blo tsa ba, *The Blue Annals*; Khams-smyon Dharmasenghe, *zhi byed dang gcod yul gyi chos 'byung rin po che'i phreng ba thar pa'i rgyan* in *gcod gyi Chos skor*, New Delhi, Tibet House, 1974.

[3]See bibliography for a list of secondary references regarding the gCod.

before Machig Labdron was born in Tibet and indeed before the name gCod was designated to the system.[1]

1.2.1. gCod and early Buddhism

We find that the Jātaka stories from the Pāli canon form an integral part of the theory of gCod, and are elucidated in gCod recitation manuals and in commentaries.[2]

Here we will give some of the stories from the Jātakas which are mentioned in the gCod texts as examples of when the Buddha practiced giving during his lives as a Bodhisattva.

When Buddha was the Prince of Great Compassion, he was once out wandering with his student in the mountains and saw, in a cave of that mountain, a young tigress who was at the point of starvation. She was so

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[1]Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen, *gCod Commentary*, p. 463. See also Janet Gyatso, "The Historical Development of the gCod Tradition", p. 322.

[2]See, for example, the thought training prayer at the end of the text by Phabonkha Dechen Nyingpo, entitled *sgyu lus tshogs su sngo ba, Dedicating the Illusion-like Body as Gaṇacakra*, trans by Lama Sopa Rinpoche, London, Wisdom Publications, 1983, pgs. 31-33. See also 'bron rtse yons-'dzin blo-bzang tsul-khrims, *gCod gzhung thar 'dod de dpon ma'i dgongs don-nyams su len tshul* in *The Collected Works of 'broṅ-rtse yons-'dzin blo-bzang tsul-khrims*, Vol. 1, Delhi, Chophel Legdan, 1981, p. 205.

hungry that she was looking at her own children as food, ready to eat them. Seing this, the Bodhisattva was overcome with compassion and thought how dreadful was this Samsāra, in which out of hunger a mother would want to eat her own children. And how horrible this self-cherishing that would make a mother wish to make a meal of the bodies of her own children. The Bodhisattva Prince of Compassion sent his student off purportedly in search of food, but as soon as his student was gone, he threw himself into the cave, thinking, when I have right here in this body the means of saving the lives of these small cubs, I should give this body right away without searching for another means of feeding them. The mother, being so exhausted and weak, could not rouse herself to devour the Bodhisattva, so he scratched his own arms, drawing blood, so that the tigress would be roused to eat him. The tigress and her cubs then devoured him completely and in this way were saved.

In another Jātaka story, when the Buddha was the Bodhisattva Monkey, he gave protection to his companion monkeys, saving their lives by making a bridge of his own body which the other monkeys stampeded over in order to escape from the greedy fruit picker. Oblivious to his own pain, the Bodhisattva monkey was thankful that his companions were freed.

In another *Jātaka*, when Buddha was again a Bodhisattva monkey, he

rescued a man who had fallen from a mountain path into a well. The Bodhisattva monkey carried the man on his back up the mountain path. The man, regaining consciousness, did not thank the monkey, but instead hit him on the head with a stone. When the monkey revived, he did not take revenge, but rather taught Dharma to the man.[1]

In another story from the Jātakas, when Buddha was an ascetic, once, while in meditation, five *raksa* demons came to ask him for his flesh. He agreed to give them his flesh, and while the demons were devouring him, the Bodhisattva ascetic was not angry at them but instead quietly made the prayer that when he became a Buddha, may these demons become his disciples. The demons were positively affected by his kindness.[2]

In addition to these early notions of giving which include the giving of one's own life and body, as found in the Jātakas, we see other elements of early Buddhism which have prevailed in the gCod tradition.

For example, the importance of meditating in cemeteries and other frightening places is a concept which has had an important role in Buddhism

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[1]*Selected Tibetan Jataka Murals*. People's Fine Arts Publishing House, China, 1982, p. 28.

[2]ibid, p. 28.

going back to the Pāli texts, as we see in Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*. Of particular importance is the meditation which is to be done in a cemetery during the practice of the Asubha meditation (meditation on impurities).

Some of the elements regarding selection of the place and behavior which the meditator should exhibit at the place parallel the behaviors and attitudes which the gCod practitioner should have when meditating in a cemetery.

In the *Visuddhimagga* we read:

> Now the charnel-ground dweller should not live in some place just because the people who built the village have called it 'the charnel ground' for it is not a charnel ground unless a dead body has been burnt on it. But as soon as one has been burnt on it it becomes charnel ground. And even if it has been neglected for a dozen years, it is so still.
>
> One who dwells there, should not be the sort of person who gets walks, pavilions, etc., built, has beds and chairs set out and drinking and washing water kept ready, and preaches Dhamma, for this ascetic practice is a momentous thing. Whoever goes to live there should be diligent. And he should first inform the senior elder of the Order or the king's local representative in order to prevent trouble. When he walks up and down, he should do so looking at the pyre with half an eye.
>
> (77) On his way to the charnel ground he should avoid the main roads and take a by path. He should define all the objects (there) while it is day, so that they will not assume frightening shapes for him at night. Even if non-human beings wander about screeching, he must not hit them with anything. It is not allowed to miss going to the charnel ground even for a single day. The Reciters of the Anguttara say that after spending the middle watch in the charnel ground he is allowed to leave in the last watch. He should not take such foods as sesamum flour, pease pudding, fish, meat, milk, oil, sugar, etc., which are liked by non-human beings.

He should not enter the homes of families.[1]

The early texts state that, in addition to the cemetery, the early disciples would have selected nine places of habitation as being the dwellings most suitable for meditation.

> "Endowed with the noble virtue of moral discipline, restraint of the senses, mindfulness and self-possession, and with noble contentment, he goes to a secuded dwelling (*senāsana*); a forest (*arañña*), the foot of a tree (*rukkhamūla*), a mountain (*pabbata*), a hillside (*kandara*), a rock cave (*giriguhā*), a cemetery (*susana*) the depths of a jungle (*vanapattha*), an open field (*abbhokāsa*), or a help of straw (*palāla-puñja*=straw hut)." (D.I. 71.; M.I. 181).[2]

In the *Visuddhimagga* (59), there are four places which are described as

[1]In the text, this is footnoted that 'he should not go into families'houses because he smells of the dead and is followed by Pisaca goblins (Pm.84). Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, transl. from the Pāli by Bhikkshu Nyanamoli, second edition, Colombo, A. Semage, 1964, p.77.

[2]Paravahera Vajiranana Mahathera, *Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice: A General Exposition According to the Pāli Canon of the Theravāda School*, Columbo, M.D. Gunasena & Co., Lts., 1962, p. 113.

most suitable for an ascetic: the forest, the foot of a tree, the open field and the cemetery.[1]

The special practice to be undertaken in the cemetery, the Asubha Bhavana, Meditation on Impurities, is the term applied to meditation on 'the ten stages of the decay of a corpse', the sign or the mental object derived from them, and the Jhana induced by that sign.'[2]

In this meditation, one is instructed to meditate on the corpse in terms of its ten states of degeneration. These ten types of corpses have been recommended as ten separate subjects of impurity meditation for the purpose of correcting the different kinds of lustful inclinations[3]:

It should be noted that although the gCod makes uses of the cemetery and other isolated places for meditation, and the ritual involves a meditation on the meditator's own body visualized as a corpse, the body is not meditated on in

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[1]ibid.

[2]ibid., p. 166.

[3]ibid. p. 169. See pgs. 166-182. The ten states of the corpse are listed as Uddhumātaka - a swollen corpse, Vinīlaka -- a discoloured corpse, Vipubbaka -- a festering corpse, Vicchiddaka -- a fissured corpse, Vikkhāyitaka -- a mangled corpse, Vikkhittaka -- a dismembered corpse, Hatavikkhittaka -- a cut and dismembered corpse, Lohitaka -- a bleeding corpse, Pulavaka -- a corpse infested with worms and Aṭṭhika -- a skeleton.

terms of its impurities. Rather, at the time of gCod, the corpse should be visualized as very attractive, rich, and enticing to the guests. It is thrown out (*bskyur*), and then transformed (*bsgyur*)[1], as it were, from a normal state of a corpse with all of its unpleasantness, into offering substances or otherwise pleasing substances. This is most likely the influence of the tantric features of gCod. Likewise the purpose of the meditation on giving of the body is to develop one's compassion for others. This represents the Mahāyāna grounding of the gCod.

Again in the *Visuddhimagga* we read of the meditation known as the 'Mindfulness Occupied with the Body', having 32 aspects. This meditation subject is taught as the direction of attention to repulsiveness thus:

> "Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu reviews this body, up from the soles of the feet and down from the top of the hair and contained in the skin as full of many kinds of filth thus: In this body there are head heairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidney, heart, liver, midriff, spleen, lights, bowels, entrails, gorge, dung, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil of the joints, and urine

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[1]Both these words, *bskyur* (throw or cast out) and *bsgyur* (transform) are significant when speaking of how the gCod meditation makes use of the body in the meditative ritual. That both words hold an important meaning in the gCod practice most likely explains why gCod texts refer to Machig's system of meditation both as "*Phungpo gzan tu bskyur*" (Throwing out the Body (lit. aggregates) as Food and "*Phungpo gzan tu bsgyur*" (Transforming the Body as food).

(M.iii,90), the brain being included in the bone marrow in this version [with a total of only thirty-one aspects].[1]

When meditating on the 32 aspects of the body, the meditator is enjoined to recite the list of the 32 aspects in various ways, frontwards and backwards, reciting various sections at various stages throughout the meditation. The recitation should be done verbally a hundred, a thousand or even a hundred thousand times, because it is said that 'through verbal recitation the meditation subject becomes familiar, and the mind being thus prevented from running here and there, the parts become evident...".[2]

We find here two parallels with the gCod ritual. One, in the gCod ritual the body parts are also listed individually by the meditator, who, in the 'red offering', calls out to the guests to partake of the body, listing the parts to be consumed, and in the Body Mandala offering, lists the body parts individually and states the substance into which each is transformed.[3]

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[1]*Visuddhimagga*, p. 260. See 268ff. for detailed description.

[2]ibid, (VIII, 51), p. 262.

[3]In the 'Body Offering of the Mandala', the body parts are listed and at the same time their transformed state as an offering substance is listed, for example, 'the right and left eyes become respectively the sun and moon,' and so forth. See the translations of the rituals, *Phung po zan bskyur gyi snam bshad* in part 2 and *Thar 'dod de dpon* in part 3 of this work.

Secondly, the gCod practitioner recites verbally, with hauntingly beautiful melodies and accompaniment of drum rhythms, all the aspects of the meditation. One can see the parallel here with the early system of using verbal recitation to help the mind become familiar with and remain focussed on the meditation.

In summary, we find elements of early Buddhism in the gCod ritual, including the concept of giving one's own body as expressed in the *Jātakas*, the place of the practice being outside the monastery, in a solitary place such as cemetery, forest, mountain, open field, the use of verbal recitation and repetition, and the meditation on the corpse. One can see through an examination of the gCod rituals themselves translated in parts two and three of this work that, although a part of the gCod meditation involves conceiving of the body as a corpse, as it is in the early meditations, the focus and purpose of the meditation is different in the gCod ritual than in the earlier meditations from the Pāli sources.

1.2.2. gCod and the Mahāyāna

The gCod has its basis in the Prajñāpāramitā philosophy and activities of the Prajñāpāramitā, the Six Perfections. Traditional scholars such as the

Amdo scholar Bamang Konchog Gyaltsen, point out that Buddha himself taught the meaning of the *gCod* on Vulture's Peak, where he gave the teachings on Emptiness.[1] Nearly all the Tibetan histories of Buddhism in which *gCod* is mentioned write of its basis in the Prajñāpāramitā.[2] We see evidence of the central role of the Prajñāpāramitā in the gCod rituals themselves. For example, the Prajñāpāramitā goddess figures largely in the meditative rituals (see *Phung po gzan bskyur gyi rnam bshad*) and the Mantra of the Prajñāpāramitā text, The Heart Sutra, (*Tayatha (Om) Gate Gate Pāragate Pārasamgate Bodhi Svāhā*) is used at the beginning of the gCod rituals (See Zong Rinpoche's gCod text in part 3 of this work).

In the *Nying Tshoms*, one of the major texts attributed to Machig Labdron, the Prajñāpāramitā texts, including the *Ratnagunasamcayagāthā (mdo sdud pa tshigs su gcadpa*) are quoted repeatedly[3].

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[1]Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen, *gCod Commentary*, p. 463.

[2]See Blue Annals, p. 980 and Thu'ukwan, p. 161, speaking of the Zhi-byed tradition as being a Prajñāpāramitā tradition and gCod a branch of that system. See also Geshe Lobsang Donden's gCod commentary, *Lam zab mo thabs shes kyi yul stan thog gcig tu nyams su len tshul 'khrid chog dgra las rnam par rGyal ba'i rGyal mtshan* in *gCod Tshogs The Collected gCod Teachings of the dge lugs pa Tradition*, Dharmasala, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1986, pp. 191-251.

[3]See *Nying Tshoms* in *gDams Ngag mdzod*, vol. 9, p. 116, 117, 117, 118, 124-5, 125, 125, 125, 126, 127.1, 129.1.

As for other evidence of the role of the Prajñāpāramitā in the *gCod* practice and theory, we may note that along with the other five Perfections, the Perfection of Giving is a central part of the practice of gCod, as one will see in the section following on the ritual, and in the texts in parts two and three.

Secondly, Tibetan historians such as Thu'ukwan and 'gos blo tsa ba, author of *The Blue Annals (deb ther sngon po),* state that the gCod tradition has taken the four main injunctions (known as the *rgyu rnam gzhi* or 'four causal aspects') of the Prajñāpāramitā as main guidelines for the gCod system. These are injunctions that one should follow in order that he or she cannot be disturbed by the Māras or demons.[1] They are:

1. to abide in Emptiness
2. to not reject any living being
3. to act according to one's word
4. to acknowledge the sustaining power of the Sugatas.

These four injunctions form the basis of the prerequisites for the gCod

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[1]found in the *Prajñāpāramitāsaṇcayagāthā* (*sdud pa tshigs su gcad pa, mdo mans*, vol. II, fol. 435a; sDud pa, fol 27a, as quoted by Roerich, *The Blue Annals,* p. 981. See also Thu'ukwan, who says they are the basis for both the gCod and the Zhibyed), p. 173.

practice as may be evidenced in the various gCod rituals themselves[1].

The first, *to abide in Emptiness* is a precept central to every aspect of the *gCod* practice. One should link every action with the understanding of that action's Emptiness. Machig Labdron teaches that the recitation of the sound Phat at the end of every verse in the meditation ritual serves to remind the yogi of the Emptiness of three aspects of the giving, i.e. the giver, the receiver and the gift itself.

The second, *to not reject living beings,* is followed through the cultivation of love, compassion, and the altruistic aspiration for complete Enlightenment (Bodhicitta). Meditation on love, compassion (The Four Immeasurables) and generating the Bodhicitta motivation are preliminary practices in every gCod ritual we have examined.

The third, *to act according to one's word*, is a reference to upholding the commitments that one has made at the time of entering the Bodhisattva path[2], as well as serving selflessly one's spiritual friend[3]. This is evidenced in the ritual in the section of Guru Yoga, which is a preliminary part of the gCod

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[1]See parts 2 and 3 of this work.

[2]*Blue Annals*, p. 981.

[3]Thu'ukwan, p. 173.

meditation. It is also evidenced in the special instructions given by the masters of the gCod, who stress that fundamental to the practice of gCod is the upholding of one's commitments.[1]

Fourth, *(remembering) the sustaining power of the Sugatas*, is practiced by taking refuge in the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha), and by performing the seven-limbed puja and mandala offerings.[2] (See parts 2 and 3 of this work).

We also find a great sense of harmony between the teachings of the great eighth century Indian Mahāyāna scholar and saint, Śāntideva, and the teachings of Machig. To illustrate, in the *Siksa-samuccaya*, the *Compendium of Instructions*, we read that Śāntideva quoted from a passage from the *Advice to King Prasenajit Sutra*, regarding how to link every activity with the Mahāyāna aspiration to enlightenment. When eating food, he quotes, one should think, "I will eat this food to nourish my body for the sake of all sentient beings. In addition, it is said that there are eighty-four thousand germs in my body, and by giving this food to them I attract them now with things; in the future I will

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[1]See Machig Labdron's text *The Twenty One Commitments* (*Damtshig gnyis-shu-tsa gcig*) as found in Dharmasenghe, *Commentary on the 21 Commitments*, n.p., n.d., fol. 67.

[2]Thu'ukwan, p. 173.

attract them by giving them doctrine."[1]

In the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatara*, the great eighth century Indian saint and scholar, Śāntideva, teaches that one should regard the body as food, and throw it out, making an offering of it.[2] These are concepts which Machig employed in the development of her meditation tradition.

In summary, the *gCod*'s groundings are very firmly in the Mahāyāna Prajñāpāramitā philosophy and practice as is evidenced by the strong emphasis placed on these practices in the ritual manuals and commentaries.[3]

1.3. Indian Sources of gCod

Although Machig Labdron is said to be responsible for the development and systemization of the gCod, it is clear that there are Indian connections to gCod. With respect to the sources related to the meaning of gCod, we have shown its connections to the Prajñāpāramitā. Regarding the Indian textual sources and lineage, we find the two most widely known are those of Āryadeva

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[1]Geshe Lhundup Sopa and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Theory and Practice of Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 35.

[2]*A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, trans. by Stephen Batchelor, Dharmasala, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1979, p. 26.

[3]See bibliography of Tibetan texts consulted.

and Phadampa Sangye.[1]

1.3.1. The buried text of Machig Labdron's previous Indian incarnation on Vulture's Peak

Before we deal with these historical textual sources, we would like to look at a legendary source, ascribed to Machig Labdron's previous Indian incarnation as Pandita Monlam Drub.

Machig Labdron relates this tale in a passage quoted by Dharmasenghe in his *Commentary on the 21 Commitments* (fol. 58) by Machig Labdron. It is of particular interest in that it may explain how the gCod ideas expressed in the gCod came from Machig Labdron, albeit from her previous Indian incarnation as Pandita Monlam Drub, and that she in fact gave her teachings to Āryadeva to use as a basis for composing his text the *Tshigs bcad Chenmo*, which became one of the root texts of the tradition.

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[1]In texts such as rdza-sprul ngag dbang bstan 'dzin norbu's *gcod yul ṅon mons zi byed kyi bka' gter bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar byin blabs gter mtsho*, Gangtok, 1972, pp. 4-5, we read of the Four Indian Streams or Lineages of the gCod which came from Āryadeva (*tshigs/bcad*), Naropa (*ro-snyoms*), Padmasambhava (*'khrul-gcod*) and Phadampa Sangye (*zhi-gcod* --(sic) this should read *zhi-byed)*.

See Janet Gyatso's article "Historical Development of the gCod Tradition", p. 325, for more information in this regard, where she mentions also the list of these four Indian streams as stated by Karma chags med.

Machig indicates to Nyechung Lotsawa that in her past life (as Pandita Monlam Drub)[1] in India she (or he) had buried an iron box on Vulture's Peak, containing her special instructions of Māhamudrā gCod, written in the Sanskrit language on golden paper with red ink. The Indian people all speak of this buried text, she related, saying that one named Machig would reveal these teachings. When the teachings buried on Vulture's Peak would again be uncovered would be the time when the teachings would be propagated.

According to Dharmasenghe's account, Machig asked Nyechung Lotsawa to go to Vulture's Peak in India and bring the box containing this text back to Tibet. He agreed, and, going first to Dingri, met Phadampa Sangye and told him what Machig had said. Phadampa (Dampa Rinpoche) went to India himself, using his attainment of swiftfootedness (*rkang-mgyogs*), enabling him to make the journey to Vulture's Peak and back to Machig's nunnery at Zangs ri khang dmar in thirteen days. He offered the box to Machig, who, opening it, saw that it was indeed the original Māhamudrā gCod text from her previous incarnation.

She then said that since Āryadeva and Dampa Rinpoche (Phadampa) were

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[1]See the hagiography of Machig Labdron in the *Namshă Chenmo*, Chapters 1 and 2, pgs 13-84.

the owners of the gCod, this text should go to Āryadeva in India, with the instructions that he should take this text as an example and write more on this subject. Phadampa and Nyechung Lotsawa read the text in Sanskrit and translated it into Tibetan. They copied it for Āryadeva, and Phadampa wrote it down again. Some blood came from his nose as he was copying out the section on 'transforming the body into food' (*phunpo gzan tu sgyur*). He meditated on the meaning and the bleeding stopped.

Then, Phadampa Sangye took the text to Dingri[1] , and Nyechung Lotsawa took the text to Āryadeva in India. He then returned to Machig Labdron at her nunnery at Zangs ri khang mar, saying that he had delivered the text into the hands of Āryadeva in India.[2]

Perhaps this story is meant to explain how the text by Āryadeva has come to be looked at as one of the root texts of the gCod tradition, along with the *Katshom Chenmo* of Machig Labdron, with Machig (although as her previous incarnation as Monlam Drub) still retaining the position of originator of the

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[1]For information on Phadampa Sangye and Dingri, see Barbara Aziz, "The Story of Pha Dampa Sangyas' Journey to Tibet". In *Tibet Society Bulletin*, Bloomington, 1975 and "Indian Philosopher as Tibetan Folk Hero" (transl. of the Legend of Lang-kor). In *Central Asiatic Journal*, vol. 22, 1978.

[2]Dharmasenghe, *Commentary on 21 Commitments*, fols. 4b, 5.

gCod. And the message that she sent to Āryadeva, to write more instructions about this gCod practice, could be explaining how the text of Āryadeva's, the *shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i tshigs bcad chen mo,* came to be written in the first place.

1.3.2. Āryadeva

The text known as *Tshigs bcad Chenmo (or shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i tshigs bcad chen mo* has been given an important role in the gCod tradition. Its author is given as Āryadeva, according to the version of the text found in the *Tangyur*,[1] and as Bramze Āryadeva (the Brahmin Āryadeva), according to the versions of the text found in the *Dam ngag dzod* and in the collection of gCod texts *gCod gyi Chos skor*. It is debated as to whether the author of the text is the famous "Lopon Āryadeva", the student of Nāgārjuna and author of *Catuḥśataka* and many other works found in the *Tangyur*, or whether the author is Bramze Āryadeva, commonly said to be the maternal

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[1] See J. Gyatso, "The Development of the gCod Tradition", p. 326. This text is found in an appended volume to the *Tangyur*, which was added later to the original. *The Tibetan Tripitaka: Peking Edition*. Tokyo-Kyoto: Tibetan Tripitaka Research Institute, 1957. Vol. 146, 171-4-8 to 172-5-1.

uncle of Phadampa Sangye.[1]

In the *Namshä Chenmo*, there are in fact said to be two "Bramze Āryadevas", a larger and smaller "*che chung*", one of whom is Phadampa Sangye[2]. This term is often used when referring to an uncle and nephew, or to two persons who bore a relation to each other in another fashion, as teacher/student. For example, it is also used to describe Phadampa's students skyo Shakya Yeshe and skyo ston sonam blama -- skyo che chung gnis, who were uncle and nephew respectively.

The colophon of the text as found in the collection of *gDam Ngag mDzod* states that the author was Bramse (Brahmin) Āryadeva. The text was then translated by Phadampa Sangye and revised by the Tibetan translator Zhama at Dingri. Therefore we know that Phadampa had a strong connection with the written version of this text as written in Dingri, in northwest Tibet, where he spent over 20 years.

As we know, the historical facts regarding the lives of the philosophers of this period, including Nāgārjuna, have long been the topic of question. Just

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[1]Thu'ukwan, p. 170. Brahmze Āryadeva is also a name by which Phadampa Sangye is referred. See *Namshä Chenmo*, p. 81; Dharmasenghe, *History*, p. 542.

[2]see *Namshä Chenmo*, p. 80.

as we find much speculation regarding how many Nāgārjunas there actually were, so too with Āryadeva.[1]

Thu'ukwan states that his own Guru, having consulted some Chinese histories, thought that the Āryadeva referred to in the Gcod is the Indian master and student of Nāgārjuna, referred to as Lopon Āryadeva.[2] Here Thu'ukwan was most likely referring to the Āryadeva found in the lineage prayers of the gCod.[3]

Thus we find that the gCod tradition has perhaps three Āryadevas in its history, the famous Lopon Āryadeva who authored the *Catuḥśataka* and many other works in the Tangyur, and "the large and small Brahmin Āryadevas", one of whom we can identify as Phadampa Sangye, and we may assume that the other is his maternal uncle, the "larger Āryadeva". There are still many open questions in this regard.

In a lineage of the '100 gCod Initiations of the unification of Direct Teachings and Termas of the Tantric Tradition' (*sngag lugs kyi bka' gter zung*

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[1]David Seyfort Ruegg, *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School*, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1981, p. 54.

[2]Thukhwan, p. 162.

[3]See the lineage prayers found in Je Tsongkhapa Commentary and in the texts by Panchen Lobsang Chökyi Gyaltsen and Zong Rinpoche in part 3.

'jug gcod dbang brgya rtsar, as found in the *History of gCod* by Dharmasenghe[1], we find the lineage listed as from Prajñāpāramitā to Buddha, Mañjuśrī, Tārā, Maitreya, Siddha Bhirwapa, Ḍākinī Sukhasiddhī, Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Asanga, Vasubandhu, *Brahmin Āryadeva OR Phadampa*, Kyo Shakya Yeshe, skyo bsod nam blam ma, Wisdom Dākinī (Machig Labdron), Son rGyal wa Dongrub, Son zil gnon chenpo, Daughter la 'dus ma, and from one of these to Khu sgom chos kyi senghe (and then on).

Here Dharmasenghe refers to Phadampa as *'Phadampa OR Brahmin Aryadeva'*. Thus we see again evidence that Āryadeva is an epithet of Phadampa Sangye himself.

At the least we may say that there is evidence that the text in question may not have been written by Lopon Āryadeva, who does indeed play a role in the lineages of the gCod, even if one does not ascribe the authorship of the text to him.[2] Buston also does not list the *tshigs bcad chen mo* in the works

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[1]*History,* p. 542.

[2]The *Tshigs bcad chenmo* was added during the later recension of the Tangyur. It is found only in volume 146, and in fact is listed as *gCod gyi zhung*, *'Text of the gCod' Tradition'*, which would indicate that it was added to the Tangyur after the gCod tradition had become established in Tibet.There is a slightly different version of the text in the Peking Tangyur, (see Janet Gyatso's article, the Historical Development of the gCod Tradition) which lists the text as *gCod kyi rgya gzhung Āryadevas mdzad pa* (The Indian Text of gCod

attributed to Lopon Āryadeva.[1]

The text uses vocabulary from the gCod practice itself. In fact there are terms which appear in the *Katshoms Chenmo* of Machig. A comparison of the three versions of the texts that we have seen, namely those from the Tangyur, the *Dam ngag dzod* and *gCod gyi chos skor*, shows that there were at least two versions. The translators are given as in the *Tangyur* version as Mipham Gonpo[2] and in the other two versions as Phadampa Sangye, who translated the text just as it had been composed, and then Zhama Lotsawa, who revised the text.[3]

The texts found in the two above-mentioned gCod collections differ in

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by Āryadeva). It should be pointed out that the text seems to have several orthographical errors in both versions. When read in combination they seem to make more sense. A critical edition of this text by Āryadeva and others of the gCod tradition are needed.

[1]Bu-ston, *History of Buddhism (Chos-hbyung), Part I, The Jewelry of Scripture*, trans. by E. Obermiller, Heidelberg, Harrassowitz, 1931, p. 131.

[2]This is said to be the name given to Phadampa Sangye at birth. bsam-gtan 'od-zer, *Mu-teg 'Preng ba*, in *bdud gCod zab mo'i skor*, Delhi, Lama Dawa and Chopel Lama, 1984, p. 40.

[3]Zhama Lotsawa translated many of the works of Phadampa (or works told to Phadampa, 3276) found in the Tangyur. See *Catalogue and Index of the Tibetan Tripitaka Peking Edition*, Kyoto, Rinsen Book Co., 1985, pp. 337-338. Peking Nos. 3267, 3268 (taught by Sāraha to Phadampa), 3269, 3270, 3271, 3272, 3273, 3274 (transl. by sTon pa sen ge rGyalpo (another of Zhama Lotsawa's names, see. p. 338, No. 3268), 3278.

a significant way to the version in the Tangyur.

They state:

de dag kun la **rab rnam kyis**

nyis su med pa'i don la bzhag

'bring gis de la gtad de bsgom

tha mas phung po gzan du bskyur.

The version of the text in the *Tangyur* Peking, ngo mtshar bstan bcos, No. 424b-426b, vol. 146, 172.3.5) reads:

de dag kun la **nyams lne gyis**

nyis su med pa'i don la bzhag

pbrin gis de la gtad de sgom

tha mas de la brtag dpyad bya[1]

The difference is significant, because the version as found in the *gDam ngag mDzod* and *gCod gyi Chos skor*, gives a breakdown of three types of beings: *rab*, *'bring* and *tha mas*, superior, middling and least. The person of

[1]This is the version from which Je Tsongkhapa quotes in his gCod commentary, *zab lam gCod kyi khrid yig* (See part 3), in *gCod tshogs*, p. 38.

superior qualities would place the mind in meditation on nonduality, the middling would meditate on that meaning of nonduality (*'bring gis de la gtad de sgom*) and the least would *throw out the aggregates as food*. This is a phrase used by Machig repeatedly in her teachings. In fact it is the name given to the famous text *Namshä Chenmo*.

The version in the Tangyur, on the other hand, giving this breakdown of the three types of beings, states that the least type of person should *de la brtag dpyad bya* (analyze) the mind.

There are still many questions to be further investigated in this area.

1.3.3. Phadampa Sangye

Historically, the lineage of Machig Labdron's gCod is related most directly to the great south Indian saint, scholar and yogi Phadampa Sangye, who visited Tibet on several occasions. He is most famous in Tibet for his teachings of the Prajñāpāramitā Zhi-byed, or pacification of suffering. The name of the tradition is derived from a passage in the Heart Sutra, which says that the mantra of the Perfection of Wisdom (Prajñāpāramitā) is the pacifier of all

suffering. (*sdug sngal rab tu zhi war sngag*)[1].

Many scholars have said that Phadampa Sangye was the direct disciple of Nāgārjuna.[2] Even if we consider him as a direct disciple of the later 'tantric Nāgārjuna' whom scholars place in the seventh or eighth century, it would still mean that Phadampa lived at least 500 years in order to have met Machig Labdron. The tradition states that he accomplished the eight common attainments[3], one of which is longevity.

It is said that Phadampa Sangye visited Tibet on five occasions, and became very well known in Tibet for his teaching of Zhi-byed, of which gCod

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[1]The First Panchen Lama. Pan chen blo bzang chos kyi rGyal mtsan, together with an oral explanation based on the Commentary by the First Panchen Lama, *The Great Seal of Voidness: The Root Text for the Geluk/Kagyu Tradition of Mahamudra. The Main Path All Buddhas Have Travelled*, English trans., Dharmasala, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1975. p.9.

[2]Thukhwan, Chapter on Zhi-byed in *grub mtha'*, p. 162, and Panchen bLo bzang Chos kyi rGyal mtsan, *The Great Seal of Voidness: The Root Text for the Geluk/Ka-gyu Tradition of Mahamudra, The Main Path all Buddhas Have Travelled, dge-'dan bkah brgyud rin po che'i phyag chen rtza ba rGyal ba'i gzhung lam,* p.10.

[3]These are the attainments of the precious pills, eye lotions, ability to see treasures under the oceans, magic sword, ability to fly, ability to make oneself invisible, longevity, and the ability to destroy sickness.

is a branch.[1] He was born in southern India, in Veta'i yul tsa ra sing ha, to Brahmin parents. At the age of 13 he joined Vikramaśila monastery as a novice monk where he was ordained by Upadhyaya Ksemadeva (mkhanpo dge ba'i lha), at which time he received the name Kamalaśrī.[2] He later was called Kamaśīla (in *Tangyur*), and again Kamalaśīla also sometimes in the *Tangyur*. He was also referred to as Naggupa.[3] The name Phadampa Sangye seems to have been a specifically Tibetan appellation.[4]

According to the *Blue Annals*, he received teachings from 54 masters,[5] which seems to have been nearly impossible historically unless he in fact did have the *siddhi (attainment) of longevity*. From the accounts of this mahasiddha's life story we learn that he was said to have achieved the eight

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[1]Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen states that it is said that Phadampa visited Tibet three times, in the early visit he was known as Shiwa Tso; in the middle time as Dampa and in the later time as Sakya Śrī or Kamalasila. p. 58. This 'three times' probably refers to the 'three periods', early, middle and later, referred to in the literature. p. 58.

[2]Thu'ukwan, p. 162.

[3]Tshul-khrim Rinchen, *bstan-'gyur dkar-chag*, ed. by blo-bzang-bstan-'dzin and don-grub phun-tshogs, Lhasa, Tibetan People's Publishing House (Bod-ljongs-mi-dmangs-dpe-skrun-khang, 1985, p. 705.

[4]Dharmasenghe states that Phadampa was called Kamalaśīla in India, and Phadampa in Tibet. *History, p. 434.*

[5]p. 981.

common *siddhis*[1], which would account for his longevity and would certainly simplify the matter of his identity, as he could have been known perhaps by a different name each century. This is a matter which could be further investigated, as could the identity of the Āryadeva (or Āryadevas) related to the gCod lineage.

Most of the lineage prayers we have read state that Machig received the lineage of transmission of the gCod teachings from Phadampa's disciple, skyo ston bsod nam bla ma. This may refer to the transmission of the teachings which form this *'brul tsho drug pa (The Six Sections)*[2]. This text is the one most frequently quoted in gCod commentaries which we have seen as representing the gCod teachings of Phadampa.[3] These are six texts relating to the gCod, one of which contains the Sky Opener Initiation[4]. There are still

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[1]Thu'kwan, p. 163.

[2]Dharmasenghe, *History*, pp. 546-548.

[3]To date, however, we have not been able to locate a text with this name. We know that it was extant in the 15th century, as Je Tsongkhapa quotes extensively from it in his gCod commentary, *zab lam gCod kyi khrid yig ma ti bhadra kirtis sbyar ba*, in *gCod tshogs*, pp. 1-45, Dharmasala, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1986, pp. 5, 16, and also at the time of 'gos blo tsa ba's writing of the *Blue Annals*. See pp. 998-999.

[4]Dharmasenghe, *History* pp. 436-7. blo bzang grags pa (Je Tsongkhapa), *zab lam gCod kyi khrid yig*, in *gCod tshogs*, pp. 5 and 16.

open questions in this regard.[1]

In the *Namshä Chenmo*, however, we find as well that Machig is said to have received many teachings from Phadampa when she went to visit him at Dingri.[2] The connection of the gCod practice of Machig with the Zhi-byed practice of Phadampa Sangye should be noted in that both traditions played an important role in various levels of society, monastic and lay. Both Phadampa Sangye and Machig Labdron taught esoteric teachings for the highest yogis and scholars and also gave advice for the common people. They taught the secret philosophic and yogic practices with which to reach complete enlightenment, and at the same time taught simple ritual recitations and treatments for healing a childhood illness, or solving marital disputes.[3] Their techniques and teachings reached a diverse audience and served various functions.

1.4. Classification and Overview of the gCod

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[1]It is said that Machig received the Nam mkha' sgo byed of the *'brul tsho drug pa* at Zangs ri khang mar. Dharmasenghe, *History*, p. 436-7.

[2]See *Namshä Chenmo*, p. 54.

[3]See Phadampa Sangye's *me tog 'phreng mdzes* and *rten 'brel 'khyugs dpyad*, n.p., n.d., handwritten manuscript in private collection of Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche and Machig's advice for healing sick children in *The Eight Extraordinary Chapters* translated in part 2 of this work.

1.4.1. The View

The philosophical view of the gCod is that of the Prajñāpāramitā. Dharmasenghe indicates that the view as Machig intended is the Prāsangika Mādhyamika view, free of elaborations and extremes, free of production and cessation, compatible with the views of Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva and Phadampa Sangye.[1]

His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Tenzin Gyatso points out in his introduction to *Tantra in Tibet* that, " according to the Prāsangika system, if one does not cognise the non-inherent existence of the person, one cannot eliminate the conception of a self of persons. If the conception of inherent existence with regard to the mental and physical aggregates is not overcome, the conception of the inherent existence of the person cannot be overcome. Cyclic

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[1]Dharmasenghe, *Commentary on 21 Commitments*, fol. 12b. Amdo Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen cautions that "if the views expressed in a certain gCod text are not in accord with the view of Nagarjuna and his disciples, then it is not an authentic representation of the words of Machig, and therefore is not a good gCod text." There have been such a large number of gCod texts written, not all of which, states Bamang and others, are reliable representations of the view of Machig Labdron. Bamang states that Machig's view and the Madhyamika view are in complete accord, and those texts which express that the view of gCod is something different than Prasangika Madhyamika, are incorrect, *gCod Commentary*, p. 635.

existence is achieved through the power of actions, and actions are achieved through the power of afflictions. Since this is so, ceasing actions meets back to ceasing afflictions. Ceasing afflictions, in turn, meets back to ceasing conceptions. Ceasing conceptions meets back to ceasing the elaborations of the conception of inherent existence which are ceased only by a mind cognising emptiness."[1] Realizing such a mind cognising emptiness is the goal represented by the view of Machig herself.

Je Tsongkhapa also states that one should look at the texts of Nāgārjuna and at treatises on the Mādhyamika for detailed information about how to meditate on Emptiness at the time of doing the gCod practice[2].

Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen points out that the complete meaning of the 100,000 verses of the Prajñāpāramitā are summed up in the words of Machig Labdron from the *Katshoms Chenmo:*[3]

gzugs ni gzugs kyi ngo bo stong

gzugs la ma chags stong ma sgom

gzugs la nges par ma chags pas

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[1]*Tantra in Tibet*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1977, p. 42.

[2]Je Tsongkhapa, *zab lam gCod kyi khrid yig*, in *gCod tshogs* p. 31.

[3]in *gdams ngag mdzod*, ed. by H:H: Dingo Chhentse Rimpoche, 18 vols. Paro, Bhutan, Lama Ngodrup and Sherap Drimey, 1979, vol. 14, p. 7.

rtagpar 'dzin pa'i bdud las grol

stong pa yid la ma bsgom pas

chad pa'i bdud las nges par grol

gzugs snang dgag tu ma btub ste

nges par ma bzung rang snang 'ong

"The essence of form is empty of inherent existence. So don't be attached to the form, don't meditate (on it) as empty.[1] By not being attached to the true existence of the form, one is freed from the demon of grasping as permanent (i.e. the extreme of Eternalism). Not meditating on it as simply empty, one is freed from the demon of the extreme of Nihilism. The appearance of the form is not to be obstructed. Just leave it as it appears, without grasping to it (as truly existent). (Then the appearance of its (own actual mode of existence, i.e. emptiness) will come.)

Dharmasenghe points out in his text *ye shes mkha' 'gro'i zhal lung gsang ba mngon du byung ba bspros pa nyer zhi brtul zhugs lam long,* that "the

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[1]In the *Katshoms Chenmo* in the collection from the *gDam Ngag mDzod,* this line reads "gzugs la ma chags stong par bsgom." p.7. This must be an orthographical mistake, as Machig continues in the next lines with regard to the phrase 'stong ma bsgom'. Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen quotes this line as "gzugs la ma chags stong ma bsgom", *gCod Commentary,* p. 539.

following lines from the human emanation of Mañjuśrī, Je Tsongkhapa, best sum up how important it is to have the correct view of Emptiness" in order to cut the self-grasping pride.[1]

In Je Tsongkhapa's words:

"There are those of little intelligence who fear the actual view of Emptiness, and some who develop their own ideas, thinking, "This is Emptiness about something that is not emptiness, and some who think that all phenomena are 'empty' and thereby 'nothing' [not even conventionally existent]. These wrong views should not be seen as the correct View of Emptiness. [Rather] may the correct flawless view of Emptiness, that all phenomena, from the very beginning, are empty of inherent existence, be realized."[2]

In this regard, the Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche points out that one should understand the correct view of Emptiness as explained by Je

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[1]Dharmasenghe, *ye shes mkha' 'gro'i zhal lung gsang ba mngon du byung ba bspros pa nyer bzhi*, n. p., n.d., in private collection of Lodro Tulku, fol. 24.

[2]As quoted by Dharmasenghe in *sprospa nyer bzhi*, fol. 24. From Je Tsongkhapa, *thog mtha' ma* in *skyabs 'gro dang rGyal dbang thams cad mkhyen gzigs chen po'i 'khrubs rabs gsol-'debs bcas*, Sarnath, Legshä Terdzö Khang, 1967, p. 206-207.

Tsongkhapa in *The Three Principal Aspects of the Path*[1] as exemplified in the following excerpt from that text:

"Further, the extreme of [inherent existence]
Is excluded [by knowledge of the nature]
Of appearances [existing only as worldly designations],
And the extreme of [total] non-existence
Is excluded [by knowledge of the nature]
Of emptiness [as the absence of inherent existence
And not the absence of nominal existence].
If within emptiness [of inherent existence]
The ways of the appearance of cause
And effect are known, you will not be
captivated by extreme views."

Machig herself, when asked by her son Gyalwa Dondrup, "How is one to look at the view?", answers:[2] "Don't see the mind as dual because the mind and the mind's nature are one in the sphere of Emptiness.[3]

"When you examine, you should ascertain that they do not exist

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[1]transl. in Geshe Lhundup Sopa and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism,* p. 43.

[2]Machig Labdron, *Yang tshoms Chenmo*, in *gDams ngag mdzod*, vol. 14, pg. 107.

[3]Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen, *gCod Commentary*, p. 540. He adds that there is no emptiness of the mind separate from the essence of the mind nor essence of the mind separate from the emptiness of the mind and remarks, "Don't think 'this is the essence of the mind' and 'that is the essence of the mind.' The essence of the mind has from the very beginning been free of inherent existence."

inherently.[1]

"Looking, one does not see one's mind.[2]"

"If the mind *does* see the mind's nature, then, the mind does not see the meaning of Emptiness."

"That which is to be examined does not have even an atom of true existence."

Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen states that Machig has made many statements like that illustrated above, all of which are the unerring view of the Prajñāpāramitā and Nāgārjuna. He states that the words of the Prajñāpāramitā, Nāgārjuna and Machig Labdron have "come out of the same throat".[3]

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[1] When one does not examine, things appear as if they actually exist, but when one examines, nothing is found to be truly existent. This is a reference to the fact that when one searches for the object of investigation, one does not find it (since it does not exist inherently). Likewise, when one searches for (investigates) the 'I', it cannot be found. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, Switzerland, 1990.

[2] At the time of investigation of the actual situation of the mind, one does not find anything. This *not seeing* (while undergoing investigation) is the seeing of Emptiness itself. Similar statements are found in Chapter 12, Verse 8 of the *Prajñāpāramitā Ratnagunasamcayagāthā*, which says, "Wherein there is no vision of form, no vision of feelings, No vision of perception, no vision of will, No vision of consciousness, thought or mind, This has been expounded as the vision of Dharma by the Tathagata." Edward Conze, English trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and Its Verse Summary*, San Franciso, Four Seasons Foundation, 1973, p. 32.

[3] Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen, p. 540.

And again we read in Machig Labdron's treatise *Katshom Chenmo* her explanation of the view in terms of the Prajñāpāramitā:

> "The ignorant mind, without wisdom, is mistaken by holding to the mind as object and is thus mistaken as to what Emptiness is. By holding the ignorant mind as truly existent and grasping to the appearance of the object as truly-existent, and then seeing these as one, (those ignorant ones) keep cycling in the three realms of Samsāra. (Because of their mistaken views,) they have to abide in Samsāra in one of the six samsaric realms of existence.
>
> Moreover, as the mind's self-grasping, (i.e. the subject) itself is wrong, therefore, even engaging in the various stages of the view, meditation and activities, they too are wrong.
>
> The mind may take the object as nothingness as the Nihilists do, or may think it is permanent as do the Eternalists, since the object is unchangeable. Or may see the object as the Sravakas do, with grasping, or may see the object as the Pratyekabuddhas do, empty by virtue of its being dependently arising, or may see the object as the Yogācāras do, the rang-rig-sems, or may see the object as the Mādhyamikas do, free of elaboration, or may see the object as in the Father Tantras, as the winds of bliss and clarity, or may see the object as found in the Mother Tantras, as bliss and Emptiness, or may see the object as inseparable method and wisdom, or as in the Māhamudrā, beyond thought, or as in the Dzog Chen, as the great Emptiness from beginningless time.
>
> So all of these are the minds which have the mind as object. But as for all the subjects: there are none. If there is not object for the mind to grasp, then there is no mind. The mind is bound by all minds.[1]
>
> But there is no [inherently existing] subject. So even this ignorance with no wisdom has been said by the Tathagatas to be the great wisdom of Emptiness. Since ignorance has no

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[1]Therefore all these minds (subject), as explained by all the tenets listed, are bound by having the mind as object.

> (inherently existent) object [since it's empty] all mistakes will be purified. If all appearances [as truly existent] can be obstructed, then all the ropes of grasping will be cut. If there is no object [of self grasping] for the mind, how can there be grasping?[1]
>
> If you know that the mind is wrong, don't hold to the objects in a wrong way.[2] [i.e. as truly existent]. Whatever conventional appearances arise to that self grasping mind, don't analyze them, they're just there (as conventional appearances). Just leave them as they are. This is the great Profound Pure meaning of the Prajñāpāramitā, it is the actual nature of all in Samsāra and beyond."

Thu'ukwan points out that the Prāsangika Madyamika view is evidenced in the writings of Machig Labdron herself. He adds that later writers have however written texts on the gCod philosophy which have not propounded the Prāsangika Madyamika view.[3]

Panchen Lobsang Chökyi Gyaltsen states that: "This tradition [of gCod] originally had as its philosophic base the teachings of the Mādhyamika-

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[1] As explained by the Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, first the object is a mistaken consciousness (*trul shes*), and the object of the *trul shes* is true existence. If you reach that state of objectlessness (*yul med)*, i.e. without mistaken or self grasping object, then the subject (*trulshes*) changes into wisdom (*yeshes*) (personal communication, Switzerland, 1990).

[2] i.e. as truly existent

[3] Thu'ukwan, *grub mtha'*, p. 174.

Prāsangika[1]. In later times its methods were adopted by all the Tibetan traditions of Buddhism and their philosophic base was varied accordingly.[2]

1.4.2. gCod as union of Sutra and Tantra

Dharmasenghe says in his commentary on Machig Labdron's text, *The Twenty One Commitments*, that on the outer level, gCod is the Prajñāpāramitā and on the inner level, it is the Tantra vehicle. It is therefore the union of Sutra and Tantra.[3] Dharmasenghe points out that the gCod is in accord with all the texts of the Sutras and Tantras, and especially with the Mother Tantras.[4]

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[1]See Geshe Lhundup Sopa and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism*, London, Rider, 1976, p. 133, for the definition of Prasangika-Madhyamika.

[2]The First Panchen Lama. *The Great Seal of Voidness*, p. 10.

[3]Dharmasenghe, *Commentary on the 21 Commitments,* fol. 12. The Venerable Geshe Lhundup Sopa points out that all Sutra and Tantra practices require the three principal aspects of the path to highest enlightenment, i.e. Renunciation, Bodhicitta and Wisdom, in Sopa and Hopkins, *Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism*, p. xv. See Tsongkhapa's work entitled *The Three Principal Aspects of the Path to Highest Enlightenment* and the commentary of the Fourth Panchen Lama, in Sopa and Hopkins, pgs 1-44.

These three principal aspects of the path are said to be the very fundamentals of the gCod practice. Ven. Zong Rinpoche, personal communication, India, 1980, public discourse, 1983, 1984; Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, 1985, public discourse, 1985, 1988, 1990.

[4]ibid. The Venerable Geshe Lhundub Sopa points out according to the fourfold scheme of classifying the Tantras, "in it, the highest, or Annutara, class is further subdivided into "father" and "mother" tantra according to

On the outer, i.e. the Prajñāpāramitā level, one needs to meditate on Emptiness together with Compassion; on the inner level, one does the meditation on Emptiness conjoined with the tantric practices.[1]

On the inner level, one meditates on the tantric practices of deity yoga. Although typically the Tantras deal primarily with dissolving one's ordinary appearance into emptiness and then arising in the form of a deity, thereby performing deity yoga as a means towards spiritual advancement and here, in the gCod ritual, the meditator visualizes himself in ordinary form. Nevertheless, the Tantric deity yoga is an element of the gCod practice.

In the gCod ritual, for example, the meditator is instructed to separate the mind and body, and should then see the mind in the aspect of a deity (specifically a Wisdom Dākinī). This section of the ritual actually contains the generation stage deity yoga.[2]

In other tantric practices, the person is transformed into Emptiness and

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whether the tantric method (upaya) or the tantric wisdom (prajna) predominates in the tantra's practice." "The Subtle Body in Tantric Buddhism", *The Wheel of Time*, Madison, Deer Park Books, 1985, p. 139.

[1]The Venerable Geshe Lhundup Sopa states that "Emptiness itself is the life of *sutra* and *tantra*. in Sopa and Hopkins, *Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism*, p.xv.

[2]Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, Switzerland, 1990).

then arises in the form of the deity, and in the gCod, the person separates the body and mind, and then actually uses that 'old, leftover' body to perform the actions as found in the Prajñāpāramitā, namely that of the perfection of Giving. On the other side, with respect to the mind, the meditator transforms the mind into the deity. The Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche explains how we could see this as the mind's generation stage (the *sku gsum lam khyer*, taking the three Bodies on the path), and the blessing of the white offerings (refer to the translations in Part 2) as containing the elements of completion stage. [1]

The gCodpa is also enjoined to practice the typical tantric generation stage yoga practices at any time that they are not making the actual offering of the body.[2]

Then, on the Secret Level, gCod is compatible with the inseparable bliss and emptiness yoga (the blazing of the tummo and melting of the drops), and on the suchess level, during the gCod initiation itself, one is given initiation into the Meaning of Emptiness.[3] Thus we see that the gCod practice may be

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[1]See also Dharmasenghe, *Commentary on 21 Commitments*, p. 12 for a discusssion of how at the time of gCod one is not asked to abandon the five meats and five nectars, as is the case at the time of the Prajnaparamita, but rather to take up those practices.

[2]Dharmasenghe, *Commentary on 21 Commitments*, fol. 97b.

[3]Dharmasenghe, *Commentary on 21 Commitments*, fol. 12.

classified as a being a union of the Sutra and Tantra.

Machig received many teachings of both Sutra and Tantra levels[1]. Her lineage related to the tantric aspect of gCod is sometimes given as coming from Dākinī Sukhasiddhī,[2] although in most texts the lineage is given as having

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[1]See *Namshä Chenmo*, p. 41 for teachings Machig is said to have received.

[2]See Kyabje Phabongka's *sGyu lus tshogs su sngo wa*, p. 14. KhedrubJe received the complete teachings of Dākinī Sukhasiddhī. *san yig*, vol. ka, fol. 62. See *gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 13, pp. 279-230 for the writings of Dākinī Sukhasiddhī.

The life story of Dakini Sukhasiddhī is given in Dharmasenghe's *History*, 425 ff. According to this account, Dakini Sukhasiddhī had a spontaneous, great faith in Dharma and practised generosity indiscriminately. She engaged in whatever possible good actions, and although she was a lay person, she held the vows of an upasika. She made offerings of her wealth to the Jewels of Refuge, and gave to the poor to such an extent that she exhausted the wealth and possessions of her family. Then, her son, losing patience with her, threw her out of the house. She then wandered all over as a beggar. She always maintained her strong aspiration to accomplish virtuous activities and she acted as a servant for others. Whatever possessions that she received, she immediately gave away. She continued in this manner, and at one time met the great Mahasiddha sgo rtsar Chos kyi grags pa. Sukhasiddhī generated great faith in him and he advised her, "You have been given over to this spontaneous practice of giving to such an extent that your own son threw you out of your home. In general, giving has a great benefit but if one does not realize the unmistaken View then one cannot become enlightened in this lifetime. You have great aspiration for accomplishing virtue and are full of faith and respect for Dharma. Come to my monastery and I will show you how you can accomplish full enlightenment. After I have shown you the instructions of the Buddha, then you can go." Sukhasiddhī went to the Mahasiddha's monastery and asked him for instructions. She practiced continuously and at the age of sixty-one became a Mahasiddha. At that time, Ārya Tārā showed Sukhasiddhī the meaning of the Prajñāpāramitā, how to mix all phenomena of Samsāra and beyond in the

come from Sukhasiddhī to Phadampa Sangye to Machig.[1] This is also sometimes referred to as the Mother lineage (*ma-rgyud*). Machig is also said to have had many direct visionary lineages, from Tārā and from the Wisdom Dākinī.[2]

1.4.3. The gCod Meditation

The gCod meditation may be classified as belonging to the path of the Māhamudrā[3]. In this regard, Geshe Lobsang Donden states in his commentary that the person who wishes to learn about the meditation of gCod, i.e. the Māhamudrā, should consult the commentary of Panchen Lobsang Chokyi Gyaltsen on the Māhamudrā, (in which Panchen quotes from Machig regarding meditation[4]).

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great sphere, how to take all bad conditions on to the path, and the instructions of the profound gCod.

[1]Je Tsongkhapa, *zab lam gCod kyi khrid yig*, p.3.

[2]*Namshä Chenmo*, p. 59 ff.

[3]Dharmasenghe, *Commentary on 21 Commitments*, fol. 12.

[4]"Hrim gyi drim dang hlos gyi los". This is quoted by Panchen Losang Chokyi Gyaltsen in *The Great Seal of Voidness*, p. 20. (from Machig Labdron, Chapter 6 of *The Eight Extraordinary Chapters* in *gdams ngag mdzod*, Vol. 14, p. 147. One should have the mind well concentrated, but still relaxed.

In Chapter 3 of the *Namshä Chenmo*, attributed to Machig Labdron herself, we read:

"As for the meaning of Māhamudrā, all phenomena, the containers and contained, from beginningless time have not even one per cent of a hair of true existence. This is the situation of all phenomena -- they are empty of inherent existence. This is the Dharma Māhamudrā.

The yogi who understands this meaning of the birthless Emptiness and who can take Emptiness on the path, and who has mastered the channels, winds and drops and relies on a wisdom mudra endowed with characteristics, this is called the Wisdom Māhamudrā.

Based on this, taking great bliss on the path, thereby generating more physical power, this is called the Action Māhamudrā.

Likewise the yogi should keep his inner qualities hidden, and at the same time should never be separated from the outer commitment substances. This is called the commitment Māhamudrā.

Not letting the steam of warmth of this emptiness of wisdom and bliss come under the influence of attachment, but leaving it in the sphere of Emptiness, this is called the bliss and Emptiness Māhamudrā.

For the yogi who is free of all obscurations and delusions and sees all appearances as selfless Emptiness like a dream (this is done in the break, between meditation session), this is known as the clear, empty Māhamudrā.

Now, as for my version of Māhamudrā (*phyag rgya chen po*) easy for all to understand: *phyag* means all appearances; *rgya* means that all those appearances, from beginningless time, have not had even the slightest tip of a hair of true existence. The appearance to the mind of the great emptiness (*yul chan*, subject) and the emptiness of inherent existence (*yul*, object), being in inseparable union, is the Inseparable Unification Māhamudrā.

Moreover, the object which appears is the outer Māhamudrā. For the yogi, perceiving both outer and inner

selflessness (selflessness of phenomena and of persons), and then (through the practice of Tantra) having the winds enter the central channel, through that sphere of experience of the complete bliss and clarity (Emptiness), there comes the special bliss and Emptiness. Out of this special sphere of bliss and Emptiness, definitely the light of the mind will increase. One will know everything in the three times. Based on this one will develop many qualities and then will be able to tame many beings. (as an Ārya being). One will achieve great abilities. This is called the Māhamudrā gCod."[1]

In Chapter 8 of Machig Labdron's *Eight Common Chapters* (*thun mong gi le lag rgyas*), we read:[2]

"As for the practice of the meaning of the gCod: having faith, perseverance, wisdom, love, compassion, respect and aspiration towards the Teachings, and respect for the Guru, one should first practice the introductory teachings over and over again. Then, the preliminary stages of Method, then, the actual meditation on the Wisdom nature, and, after the meditation session, should go about one's activities skillfully uniting wisdom and method.

Taking up the actual practice, one should take refuge and generate Bodhicitta. Meditate on the Guru and make requests, as explained. Then, either abide in the speechless, unthinkable (sphere of emptiness) or separate the body and mind, or, throw out the aggregates as food.

When occurences and the like occur, if fear and doubt arise, recite PHAT concentrating with a strong mind. Afterwards,

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[1]Machig Labdron, *Namshä Chenmo*, pp. 106-8.

[2]*thun mong gi le lag rgyas* in *gdams ngag mdzod*, vol 14, pp. 139-40.

abide in the state 'without memory'.[1] Mistaken perceptions are freed to their own place[2]. This is (the meditation on) the Dharmakāya.

After, (in post meditation session) see everything as a magician's illusion, make dedication of virtues and prayers. In the break time, with the view of emptiness, engage in great compassion. Take refuge and collect wisdom and merit. If one generates attachment, hatred, or other conceptualizations, remember the introduction (to the mind as space) and relax, with no grasping pride, no hopes, no fears. Then, in this very life,

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[1]This should be interpreted as "*rnam rtog dran med nang du bzhag*", "place conceptuality in memorilessness", i.e. meaning don't engage the mind which the fears and conceptions that arise based on the occurences of the magical manifestions. The fear which arises is in any case free of inherent existence. Don't think of those original conceptualizations of fears. Rather, realize the emptiness of these magical manifestions. So therefore dran med should be understood as saying, "place the mind in the space-like emptiness." In the case of Machig's statement, 'without memory' refers that one should not remember the conceptualizations, but rather should place the mind in meditatation on spacelike emptiness, then the conceptuality (*rnam rtog*) will be pacified and the mind will abide in Emptiness.

blo gros 'bas pa states in his commentary *gCod kyi gdams ngag phul byung gser gyi phreng ba,* pp. 161-162, that if one does not understand correctly the statements from the Sutras "*gang yid la ma byed pa'o.*" and Nagarjuna's "*ma stong ba yi stong ba in*", just looking at the words themselves, it may appear as if one should not engage the mind in anything at *all* and should not have any memory. It is not this. Rather it is "*rnam rtog yid la ma byed* ", i.e. one should not engage the mind in conceptualizations. "*ma stong ba yi stong ba yin*" means not seeing as inherently existent is the seeing of non-inherently existent.

[2]The place from where the demons of wrong perceptions arise *is* this mind which has self-grasping. So without this self grasping, there is no place from which the demons can arise, so they are cut from where they arise (Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, Switzerland, 1990).

become actually enlightened."[1]

During the gCod ritual, the meditator is instructed to observe the reactions of the mind when the demons and spirits are visualized coming to the place where one is meditating. At that time, great fear may arise in the meditator. This great fear is said to be very useful because the meditator uses the sense of fear to begin an analysis of where is the actual "I". One undertakes an analytical meditation investigating whether the "I" who experiences this fear is identical with the aggregates, or different from the aggregates.[2]

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[1]This is Chapter 8 of *The Eight Common Chapters by Machig Labdron*, entitled "*The Chapter Written by Hand*" in *gDams ngag mdzod*, Vol. 14, pp. 139-140.

[2]The aggregates are form, feelings, discrimination, compositional factors and consciousness. See Geshe Kalsang Gyatso, *Heart of Wisdom: A Commentary to the Heart Sutra*, London, Tharpa Publications, 1986, pgs. 26ff. See also Geshe Rabten, *Treasury of Dharma*, London, Tharpa Publications, 1988, p. 221 ff. re the analysis to be undertaken in the investigation of the self. See also Geshe Rabten's explanation of his experiences when undertaking this investigation, in *Song of the Profound View*, trans. and ed. by Stephan Batchelor, London, Wisdom Publications, p. 25.

"When I examined this old monk who previously seemed so existent,
He turned out to be just like the tracks of a bird
in the sky.
The appearance of a bird just turns through the mind,
But if one looks for its tracks, they are inexpressible: emptiness is all there is."

See also Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*, London, Wisdom Publications, 1982, p. 167ff. re the analytical investigation of the "I".

1.4.4. Activities of the gCod Practice

The activities to be engaged in during the gCod practice are those of wisdom (meditation on Emptiness) and merit (upholding morality, engaging in the other five Perfections: giving, patience, joyful effort, perseverance and meditation). These should be understood in terms of the concept of *ro-snyom* or 'same taste'. This means that any activity undertaken should be understood as having the same taste of Emptiness. All aspects of the activity should be recognized as being the same in terms of their Emptiness. Then, out of compassion for all living beings one should enact helpful activities such as Giving and the other Perfections.

Dharmasenghe says that "even though seeing all phenomena as the same taste in terms of their emptiness, one should keep one's commitments intact, should know what is to be taken up and what is to be abandoned. One should be skilled in collecting merit on the conventional level."[1]

Further details regarding the activities are delineated in various gCod rituals themselves, i.e. the practice of giving through the giving of the external and internal material substances, giving Dharma, giving fearlessness, giving

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[1]Dharmasenghe, *Commentary on 21 Commitments*, fol. 5.

love and compassion.[1]

1.4.5. The Result

The final result of the practice of the gCod is that one achieves the three bodies of the Buddha and then engages in activities for the benefit of all living beings.[2]

In this regard, the Venerable Zong Rinpoche explained that through the practice of gCod two Bodhicittas are increased, conventional and Ultimate, through the accumulation of merit and wisdom, respectively. The outcome is that of increasing one's positive qualities gradually until finally one reaches complete Enlightenment.[3]

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[1] See parts two and three for detailed descriptions. Also, see *sGyu Lus tshog su sngo ba* (*Chod. Cutting Off the Truly-Existent 'I'*) by Phabongka bde-chen snying-po, translated by Lama Thubten Sopa Rinpoche, London, Wisdom Publications, 1983. This recitation manual includes the White Offering, the Red Offering, the Mixed Offering, The Giving of Dharma, and the meditation on Taking and Giving.

[2]the Dharmakāya (*chos sku)*, or Truth Body, Sambhogakāya (*longs sku*) Enjoyment Body, and Nirmānakāya (*sprul sku*) Emanation Body. (Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, Switzerland, 1988).

[3]personal communication, India, 1980.

2. An overview of the life of Machig Labdron.

2.1. Accounts relating the reason for the birth of Machig Labdron.

According to KhedrupJe's *gsan yig,*[1] Machig Labdron is said to have been the emanation of the Mother Prajñāpāramitā, taking birth in Tibet in order to protect it from the outsider Ḍākinīs who were harming the Buddha's teachings in Tibet. Therefore it is said that the Mother Prajñāpāramitā manifested in four different incarnations at the same time in Tibet. Khedrub Je lists these four incarnations as:

1. Labs sgron from Eh
2. Ma Jo rGya le-lcam of Durlung
3. zha ma lha rje from La-stod
4. rGyal mo skid of Zhamza.[2]

Khedrubje lists the names of the four outsider (non-Buddhist) Ḍākinīs as

1. spal pa dkar po of Yarlung
2. tshad mo nam mkha' of stod-lung

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[1]mkhas grub thams cad mkhyen pa dge legs dpal bzang po, *gsung 'bum,* Vol ka, n.p., n.d., manuscript in the private collection of Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, p. 58. See also *Namshä Chenmo*, p. 43.

[2]See also *Blue Annals,* p. 984 for slightly different list of the four Ḍākinīs.

3. She mo rgya lcam of gTsang

4. Zhang mo rgya mthing of nyad-stod.[1]

The *Blue Annals* explains how Machig Labdron and each of the other Buddhist Ḍākinīs helped to get rid of the incorrect teachings and practiced which were being propagated in Tibet. Machig explains, in the *Namshä Chenmo*, that "one should actually do whatever possible to help others. But some people (in Tibet) these days, put out their worst offerings and invite Bonpos (non-Buddhist priests) to make prayers, and those priests kill animals and give blood offerings to the spirits in order to help the patron who is suffering from some type of problem or another. Those priests give flesh and blood as the ransom for the sick patron. In this way, they hurt one (the animal) to help the other (the sick patron and so forth). These (non-Buddhist, Bon) Bonpo priests say, 'You are sick, so you should kill an animal.' Then those priests eat that meat and leave, telling those patrons that they have done an act of good karma, when in fact they have made bad karma."

"What they should do is give most excellent offerings to the Three Jewels; they should make prayers to the Three Jewels on behalf of the sick

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[1]KhedrupJe's *gsan yig*, p. 58.

person and call a doctor to give the proper medicine for the sick person."[1]

According to the accounts, Machig's purpose in coming to Tibet was to help correct these wrong types of practices which were taking place. On other levels also, we find Machig teaching her students how to lead a better life.[2]

The account of Machig Labdron found in the *Namshä Chenmo* is that she had taken 107 previous births in India, and her 108th in Tibet.[3] She does not mention that she is one of four Ḍākinīs taking birth at the same time to save Tibet.

2.2. Birth and Prophesies

Machig Labdron was born in 1055[4] in the town of Lab, in southern

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[1]*Namshä Chenmo*, p. 104.

[2]See the "Indian Chapter Correcting the Mistakes", Chapter 6 of The Eight Common Chapters, in *gDams ngag mdzod*, vol. 14, p. 137. In this same chapter we read a statement by Machig expressing a sense of discouragement about the behavior of her own students. "Even though this old woman has explained the Dharma practice which enables one to sleep with an easy mind, the students don't take it to heart. My practice is one which has disgust for this life and belongs to the category of practice for the next life. But my students have a great attachment for the present, so they don't listen to this old woman. Now is the time for one to be alone."

[3]Again we find a strong reference to her connections with India, the source of Buddhism. *Namshä Chenmo*, p. 75.

[4]According to Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen, *gCod Commentary*, p. 459, Machig was born in the first rab-jung, the year of the water horse, which would put her birth at 1042. (See Alaka Chattopadhyaya, *Atiśa and Tibet*, Calcutta,

Tibet[1]. Khedrup Je mentions that because of her ability to clear away interferences, she became known as the Lamp (*sgron*) of Labs.[2]

Machig was recognized as a Wisdom Ḍākinī, that is an emanation of Wisdom, in the sense of being a living embodiment of the view of emptiness, the concept underlying the Perfection of Wisdom scriptures. Her hagiography and other accounts of her life state that she had all the signs of a Ḍākinī,[3] was a manifestation of the Prajñāpāramitā goddess, and yet took a human birth.[4]

Indian Studies: Past and Present, 1967, p. 567. Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen speaks of the various theories of the date of Machig Labdron's birth in his *gCod Commentary*, p. 460. See also kLong rdol bla ma, *Collected Works,* Vol. 2, p. 150.

[1]According to the *Namshā Chenmo,* Machig was said to have taken 107 previous births in India immediately preceding her birth in Tibet, her 107th as Pandita Monlam Grub, p. 75.

Longdol Lama (klong-rdol bla-ma) writes that in a previous birth Machig Labdron was the mother of Asanga and Vasubandhu, *Tibetan Buddhist Studies of klon-rdol bla-ma*, Vol. 2, Mussoorie, Ven. Dalama, 1964, p. 150.

[2]Khedrub Je, *gsan yig,* p. 58. Here, the spelling is given as Labs. Other texts refer to the place as Lab.

[3]See Martin Kalff, *Selected Chapters from the Abhidhanottara-Tantra: The Union of Female and Male Deities,* Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1979, pp. 44ff. See also on Gyalwa Dondrup's *Praises of Machig*, in Thu' kwan, *Trosma Nagmo mdun skyed*, n.p., n.d., English transl. Carol Savvas, 1987, unpublished manuscript, re the extraordinary qualities of Machig Labdron.

[4]See Gyalwa Dondrup's *Praises of Machig,* in which he praises her qualities. It is sung in many gCod rituals. Tucci has mentioned that its poetryis

As an example of her extraordinary physical status, her hagiography states that Machig neither washed nor combed her hair during her entire 100 years (some say 95, others, 98, 99, 100)[1], yet it remained very beautiful and perfectly in place.[2]

Stories of her birth illustrate her strong connection to both the Prajñāpāramitā and Tantra. According to her hagiography, there was a letter "Ah" in midst of a ball of light on the top of her head," and she was said to have immediately entered the dancing posture of Vajra Vārāhī at the time of birth.[3] She is said to have recited the mantras of Tārā[4], *Hrī*[5] and "Ah[6]", the

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reminiscent of the poetry of Rama Prasad. *The Religions of Tibet,* English transl. Geoffrey Samuel, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1980, p. 88. I had the opportunity to obtain a recording of this song as it was sung by the Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche during his retreat of the Trosma Nagmo goddess (the fierce form of Machig Labdron very important in the gCod practice). English transl, unpublished manuscript, Carol Savvas, 1987.

[1]In Dharmasenghe's *History,* p. 483, Machig is quoted as saying that that at the age of 99, she wanted to go to the western land of Orgyan (the reputed land of the Ḍākinīs).

[2]*Namshä Chenmo,* p.84.

[3]ibid, p. 23.

[4]Machig is considered to be an emanation of the Buddha Tara as well as of the Great Mother Prajñāpāramitā. (Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, private communication, Switzerland, 1989).

[5]*Hrī* is the seed syllable of Avalokiteśvara, the male counterpart of Tārā.

mantra of the Prajñāpāramitā, the Gate),[1] the Harinisa[2] mantras continuously from the age of three.

According to several accounts, her birth was prophesied in the Buddhist Canon in the *Sūtra of Clarity dvangs snyigs*, 53rd chapter, saying, "At the time of degeneration when strife and fighting increase in the land of snow in the North, a manifestation of the Mother Prajñāpāramitā, under the name of Lamp, will appear."[3]

She was also prophesied in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa Tantra*, where Buddha told that "In the degenerate times of my teachings, in the North in the town of Lab, an emanation of the Mother of the Buddhas, Prajñāpāramitā, will appear. She will be named *sgron me* and will show the meaning of the

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[6]This syllable "Ah" is said to represent the sum of the Prajñāpāramitā teachings.

[1]The mantra of the Prajñāpāramitā (Tayatha Gate Gate Pāragate Pārasamgate Bodhi Svāhā, also recited at the time of gCod as Tayatha OM Gate Gate Pāragate Pārasamgate Bodhi Svāhā) plays an important role in the gCod. In some gCod sādhanas, the mantra is recited at the beginning of the ritual. (Kyabje Phabongkha Dechen Nyingpo) in *sGyu Lus Tshogs su sngo ba*, (Zong Rinpoche, public discourse, Los Angeles, 1980).

[2]This refers to the mantras of the five peaceful and five wrathful Dākinīs, of whom Machig is the central Ḍākinī.

[3]sMon-lam mTha'-yas rGya-mtso, *man ngag zab mo bdud kyi gcod yul stan thog cig ma'i gzhung* in *gCod tshogs*, p. 307.

Birthless Essence. She will wander in cities, villages, mountains, caves, cemeteries, and will spread the Dharma extensively.[1]

Also, Padmasambhava is reported to have told the first Dharma King of Tibet, Khri-srong-lde'u btsan, that Ḍākinī Yeshe Tsogyel, "In the past, she was Tārā, now she is Yeshe Tsogyal, in the future, she will be known as Labs-kyi-sgron-ma and will propagate the gCod teachings."[2]

In Machig's hagiography, extraordinary accounts of her birth and conception are related, as well as exceptional acts which she is said to have performed.[3] Her mother, Bum Cham, was a religious noblewoman from the area called Lab; she already had two daughters and was in her forties when she conceived the child. On the day of conception, when the consciousness entered the womb, Bum Cham dreamt that four white Ḍākinīs carrying white vases poured water on her head and afterwards she felt purified. Then seven more

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[1]ibid.

[2]ibid.

[3]See Chapter 1 of *Namshä Chenmo*, 18 ff.

Dākinīs in different colors came to her with offerings, saying, "Homage to you, mother. Stay well, our mother to be."

Then a wrathful, blue Ḍākinī surrounded with an entourage of Ḍākinīs came to Bum Cham waving a knife and saying, "I will take out your ignorant heart." She cut out the heart of Bum Cham (in the dream) and replaced it with a white conch shell, on which was carved the letter 'Ah' (the representation of the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras, containing all the meaning of the Prajñāpāramitā in a single syllable).

When Bum Cham awoke from her dream she was full of joy and appeared much younger. Others in her family reported similar auspicious dreams, and throughout her pregnancy Bum Cham continued to look younger. All her wrinkles disappeared, and she developed a sense of clairvoyance.

A few days before the baby's birth Bum Cham began to hear the sound of A and Harinisa (the mantra of the five Ḍākinīs) coming from her womb. And before Machig came out of the womb it is said that her mother heard a voice inside her saying, "Mother, prepare some new white cotton cloth. Purify it with incense and perfume them with myrhh."

When Machig was born, on the 15th day of the 3rd Tibetan month at dawn, she came out in dancing posture and asked, "Mother, are you feeling all

right?" and then recited again 'Ah'.

Although it is customary in Tibet when a baby is born to immediately feed them a mixture of butter and sugar, when Machig was fed this mixture, she would not eat at first. She was gazing up into the sky, surrounded by light and rainbows. Only after some time the light and rainbows seemed to dissolve into her forehead. Then she looked around and took some of the sugar mixture, smiling at her mother and sister.

We can see in this story of her birth the example summing up her life's teachings, which contain all aspects of the path, emphasizing Morality, Compassion, Bodhicitta and Meditation on Emptiness. The Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche points out that her request for white cloth could be seen as indicating her ground of love and compassion; the incense the proper training of morality. Her concern about her mother's well-being indicates her activities of love and compassion for all mother living beings; her state of abiding unmovingly in the Dharmadhātu sphere of Emptiness is indicated by her gazing up at the sky before taking food; the mixture of the sugar, butter and honey indicates her manifesting for the sake of all living beings in the form

body.[1]

2.3 Machig Explains her Identity

Machig explains who she is, on several levels, in response to Son Thonyon Samdrub's questions.[2]

Machig answered,

> "Wherever the water is clear and motionless, with no dirt and sand, there the moon can reflect. In the same way, wherever there are fragrant flowers, there the bees come. Where I am, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas come. I am Wisdom Ḍākinī. All the Ḍākinīs arise in dependence upon me. For example, if the earth is sprinkled with water and sunshine (then flowers grow).
>
> On the external level I am Gyutrul Hlamo.[3] On the inner level I am Tārā. On the secret level I am Vajravārāhī. On the suchness level I am the Mother Prajñāpāramitā.
>
> In the very early times I was the goddess who offered Lord Buddha a flower when he was in India as Buddha Śākyamuni. In the middle I was the Ḍākinī Sukhasiddhī. Afterwards I was the Ḍākinī Yeshe Tsogyel.[4] Now I am your mother Machig."

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[1]Personal communication, Switzerland, 1990. Further details of the Life of Machig may be found in the *Blue Annals*, 980ff. and *Namshä Chenmo*, Chapters 1 and 2.

[2]*Namshä Chenmo*, pp. 92-93.

[3]Mahāmāyā, the historical mother of the Buddha.

[4]Consort of Padmasaṁbhava.

And in Chapter Five of the *Namshä Chenmo*, Machig gives details of her identity along with her 4 daughters (4 female disciples):

"On the outside I am the Mother Prajñāpāramitā. On the inner level I am Ārya Tārā. On the secret level I am Vajravārāhī. And as for my entourage of four Dākinīs, on the outer level they are the four elements, on the inner level the four wisdoms, on the secret level the four letters.

Buddha Ḍākinī is the white letter HA, Ratna Ḍākinī the yellow letter RI, Padma Ḍākinī the red letter NI, Karma Ḍākinī the green letter SA. I am the dark blue letter BAM.[1] The main deity and the entourage are the five letters. Earth is Buddha Ḍākinī, water Ratna Ḍākinī, fire, Padma Ḍākinī; air, Karma Ḍākinī; I am space. So we five are the five elements. Also, as for these the main deity myself and the four in the entourage, we five are on the outer level the five bodies. On the inner level we are the five wisdom Ḍākinīs; on the secret level the five great wisdoms. Buddha Ḍākinī is the Truth Body Dharmakāya, Ratna Ḍākinī is the Nirmānakāya, Padma Dākinī is the Svabhāvakāya, Karma Ḍākinī is Abhisambodhikāya (*mngon-par byang- chub sku*) Complete Enlightenment Body. I myself am the (Complete Enjoyment Body) Sambhogakāya. Buddha Ḍākinī is the Dharmadhātu wisdom. Ratna Dākinī is the equanimity wisdom; Padma Ḍākinī is the discriminating wisdom; Karma Ḍākinī is the accomplishing activity wisdom and I am the mirror-like wisdom. The five poisons, when purified, are the five wisdoms.

As for the view, meditation, activities, fruit and commitments. I am Vārāhī, the view. Buddha Ḍākinī is the meditation, Ratna Ḍākinī is the activity, Padma Ḍākinī is the fruit, Karma Ḍākinī is the commitment.

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[1]In this explanation, Machig is referring to herself as Vajra Ḍākinī, in dark blue aspect. She corresponds to the Trosma Nagmo, fierce blue-black goddess who figures prominently in the gCod rituals. See Geshe Champa Khedrup *Trosma Nagmo sādhana* and the Peaceful Ḍākinī Practice (see Thu'ukwan *Retreat of the 5 Peaceful Ḍākinīs*). Machig is considered to be Buddha Ḍākinī.

> I, this ordinary woman, am the Wisdom Ḍākinī together with my entourage. I am Vārāhī, the consciousness. Buddha Ḍākinī is the aggregate of form. Ratna Ḍākinī is the aggregate of feeling. Padma Ḍākinī is the aggregate of discrimination. Karma Ḍākinī is the aggregate of volition. One should visualize us in this way.
>
> I am the Bodhicitta and five nectars . Buddha Ḍākinī is the flesh and bones, Ratna Ḍākinī is the warmth, Padma Ḍākinī is the blood, Karma Ḍākinī is the breath. So in this way this ordinary Labdron myself, am the five Buddhas and their consorts; I am the assembly of Ḍākas and Ḍākinīs, all reside and are collected in this palace. I am that, oh fortunate son."

2.4. Machig Labdron's Teachers

Machig Labdron is said to have studied with many teachers. Her main teachers are said to have been: Grapa mngon shes[1], her textual lamas, skyo-ston blama[2] and dge shes ston pa, her initation lamas; Sru ma sgom chen, her Dzogchen lama, and Phadampa Sangye, her prophecy Lama. Khedrup Je mentions that she heard teachings on Dzog Chen and the rNyingma tradition of

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[1]bSam-gtan 'od zer, *Muteg Phreng ba,* in *gCod tshogs kyi lag len sogs : A Collection of gCod texts representing the ancient practices of the adepts of the Tradition*. Dist. Kangra, H.P., D. Tsondu Senghe, The Bir Tibetan Society P.O. Bir, 1985, p. 272.

[2]There were two lamas by the name of skyo. According to Dharmasenghe's *History*, p. 542, we see that Phadampa passed his lineage of *gCod dbang rgya rtsa* to *skyo shakya yeshes* and his nephew *skyo bsod nams bla ma*. It is from *skyo bsod nams bla ma* that the lineage was passed to Machig. KhedrupJe mentions (*gsan yig*, p. 58) that *"skyo chung bsod nams bla ma"* was a student of Zur shag 'byung, a rNyingma Lama from gTsang.

Mahāmāyā while in northern Tibet and received many teachings about Phadampa's oral instructions of gCod from skyo-ston bsod nams bLa ma, along with the initiation of Gyutrul. It is said she gave these teachings then to her son Gyalwa Dongrub, recounts Khedrup Je.[1] She is also said to have both taught and received teachings from the Phamthing brothers when they came to her Zangs ri khangs dmar to visit her.[2] Other teachers of Machig mentioned in the *Namshä Chenmo* are:

bla-ma zhva-dmar, from whom she received the *byams chos lde lnga, sems bskyed skor rnams, sgra 'gyur skor*[3]; bla-ma sbas-ston-pa, from who she received *bka'-rdzogs-pa chen-po'i skor*[4]; bla-ma Yar-thing pa, who taught her the *phyag rgya chen po brda chos skor and Naro chos drub skor, rJe btsun-ma'i skor, dus-kyi 'khor lo'i-sbyor ba yan lag drug gi skor, mdoha skor gsum, kri ya'i skor.*[5]

The account given in the *Namshä Chenmo* states that Machig, along with

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[1]Khedrub Je, *gsan yig*, p. 58.

[2]*Namshä Chenmo*, p. 58.

[3]ibid, p. 43.

[4]ibid.

[5]ibid.

two other female disciples, received the following teachings from Phadampa Sangye directly[1] when Phadampa was in central Tibet. Before Phadampa taught these, as related in the *Namshä Chenmo*, he remarked to Machig that actually she did not need any of these teachings since Machig is the emanation of the Great Mother Prajñāpāramitā.

He gave these teachings to Machig along with her two companions: *chos-dbang sems-la-bskur-ba'i ting-nge-'dzin-gyi dbang bzhi* and *nam-mkha- sgo-'byed-kyi- ngo-sprod 'pho-ba'i gdams-ngag*. Then, he gave these teachings to Machig:

1. *Zhi-byed kyi skor*
2. *gCod tshogs drug gi gdams pa rnams*
3. *zhi-byed hum skor*
4. *dmar khrid skor*
5. *Phat chos skor gsum*
6. *Utpa-la'i brda chos*
7. *sGyu-'phrul chen-mo*
8. *Jo-mo zhal-gnyis-ma*
9. *bKa' rgyud bla-ma'i rnal-'byor zab lam*

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[1]ibid, p. 41.

10. *'pho-ba gron-'jug-gi gdams-pa rlung-sems 'dren-pa'i lhag-pa'i lam zhugs-ma*

12. *rGyu-lus rmi-lam bar-do 'byongs-tshul cig char-du ston-pa'i phra thig gis man-ngag gi gnad*

13. *'Khrul-gcod bka'rgya-ma'i man-ngag dur-khrod chen-mo'i dmigs-bya thog-gcig-du gcod-pa'i gdams-pa rgyad.*[1]

Also listed in the *Namshā Chenmo* are the teachings which Machig received from Phadampa on another occasion: *bka'-brgyud bla-ma'i bying rlabs kyi dbang dang gdams pa zab mo thun mongs ma yin pa'i man ngag, nang rig-pa'i dmar-khrid-dbu-ma'i lam-du-zhugs-pa'i don khyad-par-can, lus-'khrul-'khor-la-gnas, rlung-las su rung-ba-byed-pa,* and many other teachings, including all the initiations and their *sādhanas.*[2]

Not mentioned in this list are the *Ro-snyoms* teachings, which Dharmasenghe reports Machig to have received directly from Phadampa.[3]

In the *Namshā Chenmo* we read that at age 41 Machig Labdron received initiations and teachings of the mandala of the Five Dhyāni Buddhas with

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[1]*Namshā Chenmo*, p. 41.

[2]*Namshā Chenmo*, p. 56.

[3]Dharmasenghe, *History*, p. 439.

consort from Tārā directly in vision while she stayed in the cave at Pugzang.[1] An account given in *zab don thugs kyi snying po bla-ma rgyud pa'i rnam thar* states that Machig listened to teachings directly from the Wisdom Ḍākinī.[2]

2.5.1 Machig Labdron's status in the lay and monastic communities

2.5.2. Machig Labdron's status as ordained or lay member

According to accounts such as *Blue Annals*, we find that Machig Labdron was said to have been at one time a nun, who gave back her vows in order to marry. We find however that it is more likely that she was not ordained, but rather, because of her special status as a "Wisdom Ḍākinī" and emanation of the goddess Prajñāpāramitā, she was given special status, including special clothing, a throne on which to sit, and even a special hat. We read in Dharmasenghe's account, that her Lama Drapa Ngonshe presented her with a special small hat, and asked Machig to reside with him for four years, reading the Prajñāpāramitā for his monastery, and she agreed.

According to the account in the *Namshä Chenmo*, however, Lama Drapa

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[1]*Namshä Chenmo,* p. 60.

[2]Prajñasvabhava, *zab don thugs kyi snying po bla-ma rgyud-pa'i rnam thar*, pp. 83-96, in *gCod tshogs kyi lag len sogs,* Bir, T. Tsondu Senghe, The Bir Tibetan Society, 1985, p. 90.

Ngonshes gave her some special clothes, including the small hat and a throne on which to sit and called her "dpon-ma chung chung", meaning "Little Noble One" or "Little Female Minister".[1] The text does not mention that he gave her nun's vows, but does say that people called her "Jomo small hat". This term "Jomò" is usually interpreted as "nun", but is also a term which can be used to mean simply "religious woman".

In fact, in this account, when Machig spoke with her Lama, Drapa Ngonshes, about her possible marriage with Thodpa Bhadra, he replied, "You do not have nun's vows, and so it is fine." He in fact encouraged her connection with Thodpa Bhadra, saying it would be good for the propagation of her lineage.[2]

2.5.1. Her marriage to Thodpa Bhadra

At one time, while reciting the Prajñāpāramitā texts at a family's home, she met the yogi Thodpa Bhadra[3] who had also been invited to that home to

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[1]According to the *Namshä Chenmo,* Machig's parents were nobility. p. 17.

[2]ibid, p. 50.

[3]Khedrub Je mentions that he was a Dzog Chen Lama. *gsan yig*, p. 58. In the *Blue Annals,* p. 983, and in Khedrup Je, p. 58, the spelling of his name is given as Thod-pa 'Ba'-re. In the *Blue Annals* we read that he was a native of gcer-grong. *Namshä Chenmo* states that Thodpa Bhadra was from the Kosala in

perform rituals. Machig asked advice from her Guru as to whether she should have a relationship with Thodpa Bhadra. Drapa Ngonshes advised her that it was actually good for the propagation of her lineage if she would have a family with this Indian yogi, Thodpa Bhadra. According to the account in the *Namshä Chenmo*, Machig was in doubt as to whether it was right to develop a relationship with Thodpa Bhadra, at which point her teacher assured her that she did not have nun's vows, and so there was nothing wrong with getting married to Thodpa.[1]

The people in the surrounding communities, however, must have thought of Machig as a nun, because, as reported in *Blue Annals*, people criticized her and called her "Jomo bka' log ma" (the one who gave back her vows). According to the statements we have read in the *Namshä Chenmo*, we feel that in all likelihood she was not a nun before her marriage.

2.5.2. Her children

The matter of Machig's children is a difficult one to determine with certainty, as the accounts vary considerably regarding the number of children

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[1]*Namshä Chenmo*, p. 50. Because of her decision to marry Thodpa Bhadra she was sometimes criticized. *Blue Annals*, p. 983.

and their names. According to kLong-rdol bLa-ma,[1] she had six children: The eldest son Ra-dra Grub-be (Enemy of the Goats Grub-be) who later became known as Gyalwa Dongrub, the middle son, Grub-chung, and the youngest Yang grub. The daughters' names are given as Kong-lcam dpal rgyan, la lcam 'bum rgyan and nyang mo bsod nams rgyan.[2]

In the *Blue Annals*, it is said that Machig had two daughters, Kong-lcam and La-lcam, and three sons, sNyingpo grubpa, grub-chung and Yang-grub.[3] The account of rDza-sprul states Machig had three sons but does not mention any daughters.[4] Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen says that some say that Machig had three sons, some two, and some one[5].

According to the *Namshä Chenmo,* Machig had a son when she was 24 whom she named Grub-pa; a year later she had another son named Grub-se,

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[1]*Tibetan Buddhist Studies of kLong-rdol bla-ma Ngag dbang blo-bzang*, Vol. 2, p. 150.

[2]bSod-nams-rgyan is the name of one of the Daughters who asks questions in Chapter 8, 9, and 10 of the *Namshä Chenmo. Rgyan,* meaning ornaments, is the term by which Machig's four famous female disciples, Sras-mo rgyan bzhi, the Four Daughter Ornaments, were known.

[3]Blue Annals, p. 983.

[4]*gcod yul nyon mongs zhi byed kyi bka' gter bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar byin rlabs gter mtsho*, p. 48.

[5]Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen, *gCod Commentary,* p. 458.

also known as Kong-po skyabs. Then, and age 30, a daughter names Grub-chung-ma also known as La-'dus-ma.[1]

Machig's nunnery at Zangs-ri khang-dmar contained statues of Thodnyon Samgrub and Gyalwa Dongrub as well as Daughter La-'dus-ma. There is much mention of Thodnyon Samgrub in the literature, although writers differ as to whether this is Machig's son or great-grandson.[2] As one can see from these statements alone, there is much work that could be done to uncover more information about these figures.

In Dharmasenghe's *Commentary on The Twenty-one Commitments*, we find a lively and detailed account of Son Gyalwa Dondrup's transformation from his previous and checkered past as 'Drubbe' to 'Gyalwa Dondrub'. After many hardships and harsh penance and strict meditation, he attained a high level of realization. At that time he was given the name Gyalwa Dondrub by Machig herself.[3]

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[1]*Namshä Chenmo,* p. 53.

[2] Some accounts say that Thodnyon Samdrub was the son of Gyalwa Dongrub's son Khambuyale. The *Blue Annals* states that Gyalwa Dongrub had three sons from his first wife and one son from another wife. Thodnyon Samgrub is said to be the son of Tshe dbang, one of the three sons by one wife, thus according to this account he would be Machig's great grandson, p. 986.

[3]See *Commentary on 21 Commitments* for full account, pp. 503-506 and Dharmasenghe, *History,* 494 ff.

2.6. Machig Labdron's students

Machig Labdron is said to have had sixteen students who accomplished realizations equal to her own, 1,260 students on the path of preparation, countless students on the path of accumulation, and 300,000 students all over Tibet who developed a relationship to the Buddhist teachings through hearing her teachings.[1]

Machig's main lineage holders are generally summed up as 16 main male and 16 main female sons and daughters, including the four sons and four daughters, and the 8 sons who were equal in realization to Machig herself.[2]

The Four Sons

1. Birth Son: rGyal wa don grub
2. Lineage Holder Son: sTong ste ngag gi dbang phyug
3. Heart Holder Son: grol sde rGyal ba 'byung gnas
4. Fortunate Son: Khu sGom chos seng

[1]Dharamsenghe, *gzhi lam 'bras gsum gyi dam tshig gyner gcig gi khrid rim ye shes mkha' 'gro'i zhal lung 'phrin las nyi ma'i snying po*, n.p., n.d., fol. 44.

[2]*Zab Don thugs kyi snying po bla-ma rgyud-pa'i rnam thar*, p. 94.

The Four Daughters

1. From the country of Labs lung var gyi bre tsha rgyan ne
2. gang bar lce grong gi zhang 'jam dpal brgyan
3. snod mda' dho dha tsha 'bum brgyan
4. 'phan yul gyi mnyang mo bsod rgyan[1]

The Eight Sons whose were Equal in realization to Machig

1. The one who was the same as Machig's omniscience: dags po rong dga'i skye med dga'yan
2. The son with the same realizations: stod phag drug gi pho snyon seng ge
3. The son with the same blessings: byang rme dhe'i snyon pa rang snang
4. The son with the same vows (activities): Sam yas kyi dam pa zang thal

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[1]ibid. Here it says that the histories of the Four Daughters may be found in gCod termas (*gter ma*, buried treasures). It is said that Machig herself buried a terma at Ya ri. Her disciple gTong ste was present at the time. Amdo Bamang, *gCod Commentary*, p. 469. See also Eva Dhargyey, "A gTer-ston Belonging to the dGe-lugs-pa School", *The Tibet Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Spring, 1981, p. 25.

5. The Son with the same ability: hlo brag tam shul gyi zhig po hur thon

6. The Son with the same compassion: 'phan yul gyi skal ldan seng ge rtsi ston dar ma yang zer

7. The Son with the same clairvoyance and magical manifestations: mal gro'i rgya sgom hag thon

8. The Son who enacted the purpose of others in the same way (as Machig): Kong-po'i rJe btsun zil non.[1]

In addition, according to Prajñasvabhava, Son Gyalwa Dondrub's lineage spread mainly in central Tibet; disciple sTong-sde's lineage spread widely in southern Tibet; the lineage from Grolsde tsho spread in Kongpo; the lineage from Khu Gom in Tsang, and the lineages of the other eight sons spread in all directions.[2]

As for the lineages of the four daughters, Prajñāsvabhāva states only that texts of the mother tantra termas spread in Kham.[3]

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[1]ibid.

[2]*Zab Don thugs kyi snying po bla-ma rgyud-pa'i rnam thar*, pp. 94-95.

[3]ibid. His Holiness the IVth Dalai Lama also states that many *rang-byung mkha-'gro-ma* (self-arisen Ḍākinīs, or natural Ḍākinīs) are residing in Kham, in eastern Tibet even to this day (public discourse, Switzerland, June, 1990).

2.7. *Machig Labdron's nunnery, Zangs ri mkhang dmar*

We know that Machig Labdron established her nunnery (seat of residence (*gdan sa*)) at Zangs-ri in southern Tibet, by the Brahmaputra (Tsangpo) River. It was a very well known place during her own lifetime, and had the distinction that all beings were welcome there, including lepers and other sick ones. According to the *Namshä Chenmo*, her teacher sKyo-ston bsod-nam lama instructed Machig to go to Zangs-ri khang-dmar, as, he said, she had a lot of connection to that place.[1] And Phadampa also told Machig, when they met at Dingri, "It would be very good if you would go to Zangs-ri."[2]

In the text by rDza-sprul ngag-dbang bstan-'dzin norbu about the lineages of Zhi-byed and gCod, we find a story of how Machig was given the monastery. According to this account,[3] an abbot of a monastery was told by his students that they wanted to go see the renowned Machig Labdron. The abbot replied, "Oh, you students are quite inferior, having to go to a woman for teachings when I am right here teaching you everything. Go ahead, go, and see

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[1]*Namshä Chenmo*, p. 56.

[2]ibid.

[3]rdza-sprul Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu. *gCod yul nyon mongs zhi byed kyi bka' gter bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar byin rlabs gter mtsho*, Gangtok, 1972, p. 59.

what she says." The students went to listen to Machig Labdron's teachings, and returned astonished, saying, "We learn just the *words* of the Prajñāpāramitā. Machig teaches the meaning."

The abbot himself then went to see Machig and they debated. He prostrated to her, saying, "Please, become a nun and be the head of our monastery."

Machig replied, "This could not work, as there is not the dependent-arising (*rten - 'brel*) for a woman to become the head of your monastery."

But the abbot said, if you cannot become our spiritual director, then please be the abbot of the monastery I have at Zangs ri mkhang dmar. There are fifteen nuns there. I offer you this monastery at Zangs-ri mkhang-dmar."

Machig agreed, saying, "Oh yes, that will be fine, as Phadampa Sangye has prophesied that I should go to Zangs-ri. I will accept your offer of the monastery at Zangs-ri mkhang-dmar." Machig did the practice known as retreats at 108 waterfalls on her way to Zangs-ri, and at age 37, she went to Zangs-ri.[1] Her protector of the place is known as Zangs-ri mtsan-dmar.[2]

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[1]rdza-sprul, p. 78.

[2]He is said to have been the Zhidag (*gzhi bdag*), or local god, of the place, who, hearing Machig's teachings, generated Bodhicitta and became the protector of Zangs-ri khang-dmar (or Zangs-ri mkhar-dmar), ibid, p. 61.

From age 40 on she gave many initiations. People from all over Tibet came to see her. And also, gods, deities of the mountains, beings with no bodies, came to see her.[1]. All the land owner gods became lay Dharma practitioners. Once she taught for 21 days to these bodiless deities.[2]

We have found references to Zangs-ri mkhang-dmar in later documents of pilgrimages.[3] We know, for example, that in the 20th century it was a Gelukpa monastery and a dependency of Ngari Dratsang (*mnga-ri gra-tshang*).[4]

Machig's body was said to have been preserved there and remained intact even in the early 20th century[5]. The body must have been prepared in the

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[1]rdza-sprul, p. 79.

[2]ibid, p. 80.

[3]Chandra Das visited the place, which he refers to as the monastery Zangs-ri Kha-mar, in 1882. It is in a district in Lhokha, he explains. Its name means Copper mountain, or Copper hill. He states that the zangs-ri bkra- shis mthong-smon, is the name of the Jong of Zangs ri. *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*, Kyoto, Rinsen Book Company, reprint 1979, p. 1091.

[4]See G. Tucci, *To Lhasa and Beyond*, p. 129. See also Keith Dowman, *The Power Places of Central Tibet: The Pilgrim's Guide*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1988, p. 248.

[5]mk'yen brtse, *Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet*, trans. A. Ferrari, completed and edited by Luciano Petech, Roma, Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1958, p. 48. The statue was famed as a 'talking statue', mk'yen brtse, p. 48. See also Kah-thog Situ Chos kyi rgya mtsho, *An Account of a Pilgrimage to Central Tibet during the Years 1918 ro 1920 being the text of Gangs ljongs dbus stang gnas lam yig nor bu zla shel gyi se me do,*

special method of preparation reserved for very high masters, referred to in the texts as *mar-gdung*.[1]

This lifesize statue of Machig is said to have been at Zangs ri khang mar until the Chinese invasion in 1959.[2] At the time of Kah-thog Situ Chos kyi rGyatso's pilgrimage[3] to Central Tibet (1918-1920) we known that the statue was still there[4].

In his description of the monastery he says the lower Assembly Hall contained statues of rJe Tsongkhapa, Gyalwa Kalsang Gyatso (Seventh Dalai Lama), The Fifth Dalai Lama, two sets of the Extensive Prajñāpāramitā texts,

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Tashijong, Pamapur, HP, The Sungrab Nyammo Gyungphel Parkhang Tibetan Craft Community, 1972, p. 246.

[1] In this method of preparation the body is first specially preserved in salt and then encased inside a statue.

[2] In 1988, Geshe Khedrup of the Tibet Institute, Rikon, Zurich, Switzerland, visited Zangs ri khang dmar. He provided me with photos, which showed the devastating destruction of the nunnery. Of course we cannot be certain, but one may assume that the statue was at that time destroyed, unless those residing there managed to hide it before the destruction by the Chinese.

[3] Kah-thog Si-tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho, *An Account of a Pilgrimage to Central Tibet during the Years 1918 to 1920 being the text of Gangs ljongs dbus stsang gnas bskor lam yig nor bu zla shel gyi se mo do*, Tashijong, Pamapur, HP, The Sungrab Nyasmso Gyunphel Parkhang Tibetan Craft Community, 1972, pp. 246-7.

[4] ibid, p. 246.

and others; in the room above was the life size statue of Machig Labdron containing her remains, from when she passed away at age 99; this statue was made of clay and decorated with gold and bronze ornaments, including a golden crown ornaments, which was kept locked in a box for safekeeping.

There were Lima[1] statues of Son Thod-smyon, Dampa Sangye, Son Gyalwa Dondrub, Thodpa Bhadra, Ladü Dorje Drolma[2] and others, three feet high, as well as statues of Machig grub rGyal[3], Sukhasiddhī, Yeshe Tshogyel, Yum Chenmo (Prajñāpāramitā), Jowo Atiśa, The Four Daughter Ornaments[4] also three feet high. There were also three feet high statues of rJe Tsongkhapa, the Fifth Dalai Lama, the Buddhas of the Three Times, the Sixteen Arhats, beautifully arranged around the hall, and Vajrasattva and white Tārā built by

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[1]Lima is a metallic compound containing more gold and silver from which images are usually made. Chandra Das, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*, p. 1213.

[2]Perhaps Machig's daughter, *Namshä Chenmo*, p. 51. Also see Dharmasenghe, *History*, p. 542.

[3]Machig grub-rGyal is the Indian great yoginī who was said to have attained the state of immortality. She wrote the long life *sādhana* of Amitāyus and gave this to Rāchungpa, who presented the text to Milarepa. This text exists still today (manuscript in the private collection of Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche).

[4]*Sras-mo rgyan bzhi*, Machig's four female disciples.

Samdrub Phodrang.[1]

There was also a *gter-ma* clay statue of Six-armed Mahākāla, which Drapa Ngos-shes had uncovered, a *lima* statue of Vajravārāhī, and of Buddha Śākyamuni, the *gterma* statue of Vajradhāra of black stone, which Machig uncovered, the skull of Kyoton Sonam Lama bearing the letter OM, and a spectacular *rang-'byung* (naturally-arising) statue of Vajravārāhī.

In addition, Situ describes seeing there Machig Labdron's tea cup with cover, dishes for dining, a rosary of skulls, gCod *damaru* inscribed with Lantsa script, an Indian bell.

There were also eight sets of dining dishes of Trulku Drapa Gyältsän, (a Lama from Drepung's Ngari Dratshang during the seventeenth century), along with his upper monk's garment and belt; the shoes of Machig Labdron and Daughter Ladu; and Machig's complete set of bone ornaments.

We know that in Machig's time she gave many discourses at Zangs-ri khang dmar, and that disciples came from all over Tibet, and even from India and Nepal.[2] In the story of the four Indian pandits who visited Machig at Zangs ri khang dmar to test Machig's teachings, we find that, having been thoroughly

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[1]A twentieth century government official from a noble family.

[2]*Namshä Chenmo*, p. 77.

convinced of the authenticity and excellence of Machig's teachings, they requested that Machig give them some of her texts to take back to India. She complied with their request, sending many texts, and it is in this way that Machig is said to have stated, "Although normally all Dharma came from India to Tibet, mine is the only Dharma teaching which has gone from Tibet to India."[1]

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[1]*Namshä Chenmo*, p. 79.

3. THE CUTTING PRACTICE

3.1. What is to be cut

In Chapter One of *The Eight Extraordinary Chapters* by Machig Labdron, we read Machig Labdron's own words regarding what is to be cut:

"As for the word "cut", what is to be cut?

One should cut one's attachment to the body.

One should cut the root of one's mind.

One should cut all directions with respect to the base.

One should cut the taking up and casting away on the path.

One should cut all hopes and fears about the fruit.

If one cuts all conceptuality at all times right from where it comes up, this is known as Cutting (*gCod*)."

Machig taught that what is to be cut through this practice of gCod are one's self-cherishing (*rang-gces-'dzin*) and self-grasping (*bdag-'dzin*). This is accomplished through the collection of merit (i.e. engaging in Giving, Ethics, Perseverance, Patience, Meditation) and wisdom (developing the wisdom having the correct understanding of Emptiness), respectively. Because of the rather difficult task that the gCod practitioner has, that is, of giving up all of his

attachments even to the point of giving his own body, it is considered a very difficult but extremely effective means of spiritual development. Therefore the great gCod master the Venerable Zong Rinpoche has said that gCod is like taking a jet plane to Enlightenment rather than walking.[1]

3.2. Machig's Definition of a Demon

In Chapter 3 of the *Namshä Chenmo* we read Machig's explanation given to her disciple Gangspa rMug-sangs when asked about the particulars of the demons:

"A demon is not something with a large figure and black color, which we are frightened to look at. A demon actually is anything which obstructs one's progress towards Enlightenment. That's what is known as a demon. Therefore, loving friends and relatives can become demons insofar as they obstruct one's liberation. Especially, there is no greater demon than one's self-grasping. As long as one has not cut this self-grasping, then all the demons are standing around with their mouths wide open. So therefore, one should become skillful and exert effort in the means of cutting this self-grasping. Along with that one also needs to cut the other three demons that are generated out of that

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[1]Zong Rinpoche, personal communication, India, 1980.

self-grasping."[1]

3.3. The Four Māras according to the gCod system

The self-grasping and self-cherishing attitudes to be cut are also known as the Four demons.

The nomenclature which Machig has used in describing these Four demons or Māras differs from the traditional designation of the demons. Generally they are referred to as the demon of delusions, demon of the aggregates, demon of the son of the gods and demon of Māra, (which Machig herself also refers to in the *Nyingtshoms*:)[2]

At the time of gCod, however, they are defined more specifically as the

1. obstructible demons (*thogs-bcas*)
2. non-obstructible demons (*thogs-med*)
3. demon of joy (*dga'-brod*)
4. demon of proud self-grasping[3] (*snyems-byed*)

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[1]*Namshä Chenmo*, pp. 109-110.

[2]In *gdams ngag mdzod*, p. 129.

[3]From the *Katshoms Chenmo*, pg. 7 in *gdams ngag mdzod*. The Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche points out that the word "*snyems*" (pride) means self-grasping (*bdag-'dzin*) and that this demon of self-grasping pride is the root of all the Māras, which is why the most important aim of the gCod practice is

Machig presents a detailed explanation of these Four Māras (*bdud*, Tib.) or Demons, in the *Katshoms Chenmo:*

"The root of the demons is one's own mind. The effect of those demons can be felt in one's attachment and clinging to whatever appears to the mind. When one holds the mind itself as an object, then deception arises."

"The demons can be classified as four:

1. obstructible -- those which arise in reliance upon an outside object
2. unobstructible -- those which arise in reliance upon investigation by the inner mind
3. Joy -- which comes from thinking that one has some good qualities and
4. Self-grasping Pride -- which comes from having dualistic conceptuality of subject and object.

When one's mind holds definitely to those demons, then one is bound to Samsāra.

(Regarding the obstructible demon):

As for form, its essence is empty. Do not get attached to the form -- rather, meditate on Emptiness. By not being attached to the form as being definite (i.e. inherently existent) one is freed from the demon of holding the extreme of permanence. But also, by not thinking that the mind is nothing at all, then one will definitely be freed from the extreme of nihilism.

Conventional appearance of form is not something that has to be obstructed. Rather, simply don't hold it as inherently existent. Its conventional appearance will arise, but just let it arise. What one has to obstruct is what is *not* there, which is its (seemingly) inherent existence. There *is* the conventional appearance; you don't have to obstruct that. Then, its natural mode of existence (Emptiness) will be seen.

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to cut this demon of self-grasping pride. The antidote for this self-grasping pride is the wisdom which realizes Emptiness. See Dharmasenghe, *sprospa nyer zhi*, n.p., n.d., fol. 43.

Likewise, in that way, by obstructing that grasping to sound, smell and all phenomena as as inherently existing, one is freed (from those demons).

(Regarding the unobstructible demon:)

As for the mind, it is an unobstructible demon. Something that arises to the mind by means of the senses is known as an obstructible demon. Whatever appears as object of the senses, if one applies the reasoning of the Middle Way (to those appearances, then one cuts straight through the ordinary conception of things being truly existent.

We need to hold as inseparable the appearance and Emptiness. Then, great ignorance is transformed (into Wisdom).

As for the way that the unobstructibe demons arise: all good and bad conceptualizations which arise as objects to one's mind when one investigates are said to be unobstructible.

Through realizing that they have arisen from one's own (mistaken) mind, thereby holding gods as good and demons as bad and having hopes (such as hoping to get attainments from demons) and fears (about the demons which could harm oneself), then it is as if one's own demons of the (mistaken) mind come to oneself.

Out of the clear and profound great sphere of Emptiness, all kinds of memories and conceptions arise (adventitiously) to one's mind. For example, just like the waves arise from an unmoving ocean.[1] So too, those people with some understanding should not try to contrive or alter their conceptualities, but rather should just leave them in their own place. If the mind abides in the sphere of Emptiness[2], then conceptuality neither helps nor harms. Conceptuality will be freed to the sphere of Emptiness.

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[1]When waves arise on an ocean, this does not mean that the ocean is faulty. They come up adventitiously and then go back into the ocean. Even while the waves are one the surface of the ocean, they do not disturb the depths of the ocean. So one should should leave them alone, as they will go back on their own, into the ocean.

[2]The depths of the ocean, to use the previous example.

The yogi who knows how to place the mind in this Dharma sphere does not have to contrive or change anthing with respect to the conceptuality.

(The demon of joy:)

The demons of joy arise from the deluded state of one's perception. If one becomes proud about not being affected by the demons in a scary place, that is a demon of joy. If one feels joyful about gaining certain signs of blessings, powers, accumulation of merit or wealth, that is the demon of disturbance. If one feels joy about gaining profit, fame, friends, and (gaining the ability to get rid of) enemies, these are the demons of increase. (spro). The joy and delight one develops when receiving attainments bestowed by gods and demons, or for example, (gaining) sons and followers, these are aspects of the demons of joy.

Whatever qualities that develop, one should think of the object (that quality) and the mind as essentially the same (in terms of their emptiness). One should not hold these qualities as specially pure, but should see them as just objects in a dream. One should not cling to these experiences of joy; as they have no inherent existence."

(The Demon of self-grasping pride:)

Although there are four divisions of demons, they are all actually contained in the demon of self-grasping pride.
When one has attachment, and proud self-grasping towards any outer object, that is explained as an obstructible Mara. All attachment and hatred towards an object can be cut as soon as the mind can cut its grasping. (When the self-grasping) is cut, then the grasping to the outer object is freed.

By possessing the understanding which is free from the root of self-grasping pride, then the obstructible demons, and all the demons, will definitely be cut, just as a magician (who knows the trick behind the illusion) will not be attached to any appearances (which are conjured up). Therefore one should cut the rope of self-grasping pride.

"The unobstructible demons are also contained in the

> demon of self-grasping pride. The five poisons, etc., the delusions and fear about demons which we do not see, or hopes in gods who have no actual substance, likewise all the hopes and fears which are objects of the mind, they all arise from self-grasping pride. These are the demons of self-grasping pride."..."Also the demon of joy is collected in the demon of self-grasping pride. Having joy about ordinary phenomena and joy about the supreme result, this comes from one's self-grasping pride."

The demon of self-grasping pride is the demon from which all the others arise, and thus the ultimate aim of the gCod practice is cutting this demon of self-grasping. Of course this is extremely difficult to accomplish and if this demon of pride IS actually cut, then one is enlightened. The means of cutting this demon of self-grasping pride is the Wisdom realizing Emptiness, and, as one can see from the commentaries, such as the commentary by Je Tsongkhapa translated in part 3 of this work, much emphasis is placed on the development of the correct view of this Wisdom.

In the *Yangtshom* of Machig Labdron,[1] we read Machig's response to the question, "How does one cut the ropes of self-grasping pride (literally *snyem*, meaning grasping)?"

Machig answered: "When the demon of joy comes up, if one does not

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[1]In *gDams ngag mdzod*, Vol. 14, p. 105.

that its place of arising is free of inherent existence, then one has not perceived the meaning of the Prajñāpāramitā and one has gone tunder the influence of the demons (Māras). At the time when the mind has gone under the influence (the notion) of self-inherently existent, then one stays in the place of the demons. But since the "self" does not inherently exist, the demon of grasping to inherent existence also does not inherently exist. When the grasping of the mind, which has no inherently existing base at all, is overpowered with the understanding of Emptiness, then all the demons are overpowered. One is freed from all suffering. Objects are purified; subjects are freed. The demon of joy is eliminated. The mind will be without attachment; the mind's self- grasping will be freed. The actual nature of conceptuality is empty of inherent existence. If you understand this, my son, you know the actual nature of the mind, that is its lack of true existence. Then all the demons are destroyed."

3.4. Machig Labdron's Account of what the gCod is

In the *Namshä Chenmo*, Machig is asked by Thodnyon, "Why is our practice of gCod much more sublime and profound than other teachings?" and Machig answers:

> "Oh listen, Son. My teaching of the Māhamudrā gCod is more profound than others. Its profound uncommon quality,

unlike other teachings, is that it is the essence of all instructions, the very drop of the essence of all the teachings of Dharma. It is the zenith of all vehicles. Our system, the Māhamudrā gCod, is more profound than others; it is especially profound, and has special attributes unlike other teachings. Many instructions are concentrated in this very ghee of the essence of all Dharmas, the zenith of all Dharamas. It is the supreme essence of the Sūtras and Tantras put together into one. It is the very Dharmadhātu, by which the four demons are freed to their own place. It is the supreme method of abandoning the five poisons. It makes the five poisons completely powerless. It is the ax to cut the tree of self grasping from the very root. It is the army to directly divert the forces of Samsāra. It is the power to destroy the 80,000 spirits (psychological demons). It is the supreme medicine to destroy the 424 illnesses. This special Dharma of mine is the Yoga of the gCod, the Holy Dharma which is extraordinary and different from other spiritual systems in that it brings about Enlightenment in one single lifetime with one single body, rather than producing fruits in the distant future.

Son, nowadays, those who practice Dharma are attached to this life and being so, do not give up this idea of self grasping and are attached to their bodies and enjoyments wealth, power, relations with their relatives and friends. They seek means, such as wrathful mantras, substances and powers and energies to divert the harms that come to one's wealth and power or to one's relatives and friends by using methods such as protection wheels, or meditating on protective circles. They engage in these with great effort.And some teachers give teachings, invite monks and establish monasteries, but are actually seeking offerings, wealth and respect. This is not in the least a Mahāyāna practice.

They haven't the ability even of the tip of a hair to be freed from Samsāra. Their wrathful means of sending off the demons and beings with great anger and this beggar's system of gCod, endowed with the power of love and compassion, are completely different.

I *invite* these harmful beings and collect them all around me through the power of love and compassion. Cherishing others, I offer this body which is to be abandoned and all of its

enjoyments. I offer it completely, without any sense of loss.

To the higher guests, I offer it as offering substances to the three Jewels, and downwards to the six realms of beings, to the lords and ladies to whom I am karmically indebted. And especially, to those who are intent on doing harm to my life, those fearful spirits, *asuras*, I give all excellent substances without any sense of attachment.

This is the teaching of this woman myself. This body and life which are so much cherished, this demon, is thrown out as food. This demon of self-cherishing is without hesitation thrown out as offering substances, thus spontaneously cutting the grasping of the body. This is the very teaching of the woman myself.

Bury the mindfulness and mind in the birthless sphere of space. Doing this, true existence will be obstructed and the force of selflessness will come spontaneously. One will be freed. And not only that, in order to generate renunciation towards Samsāra, and in order to cut off attachments to the world and to generate the mind which realizes selflessness, go to an empty place, without people. Then self grasping which arises in dependence on an outer object will be cut.

The consciousness is shot up into space and mixed with space -- thus the understanding of Emptiness comes by itself. Remaining in that state, the grasping to the self is cut and the unborn consciousness comes by itself. Thus remain in the sphere of Emptiness and cut the grasping to the self. This is my system of gCod."

3.5. The place for the practice of gCod

One can observe in the statements from the *Namshä Chenmo* in the above section that the place where one practices is an important issue in the gCod

meditation, particularly for beginners.[1] "In order to cut off all this, go to a solitary place without people. If you stay there (in such a place) the grasping to the appearance of the outer object will be cut."

There are said to be two kinds of places in which one can practice gCod, the ordinary and the extraordinary.[2] The extraordinary place is meant only for those practitioners who already have attained a high level of realization. These high level practitioners will benefit by meditating in cemeteries, or forests where ghosts dwell, or the top of a cliff or precipice, or the bank of a fast flowing river. But one must already have gained a certain amount of strength to be able to face such sensitive, anomalous, and thereby powerful places. An ordinary person, it is cautioned, should not go to such a frightening place when first beginning the practice, as it could be very dangerous for that person.[3] This statement is similar to some of the statements in the *Visuddhimagga*, where

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[1]In the gCod tradition, the place in which one practices is considered to be very important, particularly for an ordinary level being, as their inner faults or qualities are said to arise in dependence upon the outer situation. sMon lam Tha yas rGya tsho, *man ngag zab mo bdud kyi gcod yul stan thog gcig ma'i gzhung* in *gCod tshogs*, p.325.

[2]Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, *The Practice of gCod*, Geneva, Dharma Diffusion, 1983, p. 2.

[3]Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, Switzerland, 1985.

it is cautioned that one should take care not to become overly afraid, as this can lead to madness.

Therefore a beginning practitioner of gCod should do the practice in the comfort of her own meditation place, at home or in an otherwise non-frightening retreat place, such as a pleasant grove. However, for those who are able to practice in an extraordinary place, there are many detailed descriptions of such places found in the textual material and in the oral tradition.

The importance of doing the practice in a scary or sensitive or power place (*gnyan-sa*) is explained clearly in the commentary of Panchen Lobsang Chokyi Gyaltsen's *Thar dod Ded dpon* by Lobsang Tsultrim, where he explains that,

> Just like certain Tibetan medical treatments such as drawing blood or applying fire are immediately effective if applied exactly on the right spot. So too, if they are not performed on the right spot, no signs occur. Here also, if you go to the right sensitive spot, then all the signs occur immediately. If it is not the right spot, then no signs occur. So it is extremely important to be on the right spot... For example, -- if one is not aware of where a thorn is exactly in the body and presses everywhere, when the finger finally touches the spot where there *is* a thorn, then one experiences pain.
>
> Likewise when one arrives at that scary place, one should go three times around that spot, and where some different feelings are experienced, one should immediately sit on that very spot where the special feelings arose, and take some stones from that

spot and put them under you seat, thinking them to be the most cherished property of the local gods. Say, from today on, this ground and this place, belongs to me, the yogi myself and not to you.

Thus reciting, one will obtain certain signs (which will feel) as though someone has stepped on the hem of your chuba (dress).[1]

According to Lobsang Tsultrim:

There are many places described in the Tantras which are said to be especially good for the attainment of *siddhis*. It is said, in the Tantras, that even the difference of one arm's breadth can make a difference -- for example practicing in certain spot can lead to the increase in one's realizations, while practicing in a spot just an arm's breath away can lead to deterioration of one's realizations. It is said that many of the inner defects and faults arise out of the faulty place. The beginners are not able to transform some of those unpleasant circumstances onto the path, and so, in the beginning, one should practice in a pleasant place like a grove, somewhere peaceful and pleasing to one's mind.

When one has made quite some progress in the gCod practice and is able to integrate well in the wrathful, unpleasant experiences which occur in places where gods and demons dwell, then one should go to those wrathful and terrifying places where no one dares to go even in the daytime.[2]

Tsongkhapa and Lobsang Tsultrim[3] also remark that at best, one should do the gCod without restricting oneself to any definite time or any definite

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[1]blo bzaṅ tshul khrims, in *The Collected Works of 'bron rtse yoṅs 'dzyin tshul khrims*, Vol. 1, pp. 196-236, Delhi, Chophel Legdan, 1981, p. 207.

[2]ibid., p. 203.

[3]ibid, p. 203.

place. Regarding the time, Machig Labdron herself, in a passage quoted by Lobsang Tsultrim, says that, "The best is that one should do the practice irrespective of any particular time. The middling is that one should do the practice at dusk and at late afternoon, and at the very least, one should do the practice during the day."[1]

The commentaries, both oral and written, clearly state the importance of practicing in a place where one feels no fear or fright during the beginning stages of the practice. [2]

The importance of doing the practice of gCod in a place which evokes fear is that in such a frightening place, which is said to be inhabited by ghosts and demons, one has a much better chance of recognizing the object of refutation which is this innate grasping to the ego, because at the time of immense fear the object of negation becomes very clear. For this reason, great yogis and gCod practitioners choose dangerous or frightening places for their

[1]as quoted by Lobsang Tsultrim, p. 203.

[2]There are many lively stories related to the beginning gCodpas who try to venture too soon to a scary place. They would sometimes becomes so frightened that they would thereafter give up the practice completely. We find parallels here in the way of meditation on impurity (Asubha meditation) in the *Visuddhimagga*, where the meditator is enjoined to prepare against excessive fear by making a very thorough investigation of the place before doing the meditation.

practice to help their realization to grow well.[1]

Although the importance of the place is stressed, nevertheless it is the yogi's motivation and mental processes that determine the effectiveness of the place on their practice. The great twentieth century gCod master, Geshe Lobsang Donden, refers in his gCod commentary to statements from the *Ratnagunasamcayagāthā* (*mdo sdus pa*) regarding where the Bodhisattvas should reside. This text states that even if they stay in a solitary place, if they are thinking or hoping for praise themselves or if they are criticizing others, these are acts of Mara and should be destroyed.[2]

And Dharmasenghe is his commentary, *sprospa nyer zhi*, quotes from Machig, that "one's body is the biggest scary place. One's inner mountain of self grasping is greater than any other outside mountain. If one goes to an outer scary place but still does not cut off the inner scary place, it does not help (to go to that outer scary place)."[3]

The Venerable Zong Rinpoche stresses that it is of course one thing to

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[1]Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, *The Practice of gCod*, p.7.

[2]Geshe Lobsang Donden (blo-bzang don-ldan), *Lam zab mo thabs shes kyi spzod yul stan thog gcig tu nyams su len tshul 'khrid chog dgra las rnam par rGyal ba'i rGyal mtshan*, in *gCod tshogs*, p. 237.

[3]As quoted by Dharmasenghe, *sprospa nyer zhi*, fols. 61-62.

practice gCod within the safety and comfort of one's home and quite another to go to a cemetery or haunted place. But as the important thing is to cut the self-cherishing and self-grasping, the place and time are not of primary importance. One can meet the frightening, or otherwise inamicable circumstances, in a variety of situations.

Zong Rinpoche points out that this system of Machig's was developed to actually test one's development of Bodhicitta and Emptiness, and to cut the notion that the "I" is central. He continued, "One could take the example of a soldier. When there is no war, it appears the soldier can do well. But his real test comes in the actual fighting." The practice of gCod then, to follow this analogy, is the actual fighting. One jumps right into any situation, at any time and place, and faces whatever situation.[1]

In this regard, the expression *ar la btad* "get right on top of it", used often in Machig's texts and in the earlier commentaries,[2] sums up how the gCodpa uses fear and other inamicable circumstances, such as illness, to help

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[1]Zong Rinpoche, personal communication, India, 1980.

[2]The Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche further clarifies this term with the example that, if you have a dirty spot on a piece of clothing -- put the soap right on that spot and wash it clean. See Manjughosa Natha (Jamyang Gonpo), *Zab Don thugs kyi snying po'i sdus don,* pp. 96-103, in *gCod tshogs kyi lab len sogs*, Bir, D. Tsondu Senghe, 1985, p. 97.

him/her with spiritual progress. In Jamyang Gonpo's *Zab don thug snying* we read:

nyam nga bag tsha byung na / rnam rtog ar la gtad

"Whatever fear or fright arise, step right on top of that conceptuality."[1]

And again he points out that one should sleep in a fearful place, because there good progress can come about. When the person who has the fear perceives himself as selfless, then fear is freed in its own place.[2]

At the time of the arisal of fear in the gCod practitioner, he/she should use this opportunity to meditate on the selflessness of persons. For example, if one gets an illness, one should see it as without any true existence. And instead of being afraid of it, one should stay right with it, (and meditate on its emptiness of inherent existence). Apply the proper antidotes and then get rid of it.

In this regard one finds many accounts of gCodpas who intentionally contracted illnesses[3] in order to 'enter the fighting', in the words of the Venerable Zong Rinpoche, to jump right into the situation and use the

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[1]ibid, p. 96.

[2]ibid, p. 97.

[3]*Blue Annals*, p. 994.

experience as an opportunity for identifying the actual nature of the self.

3.6. The requirements regarding the type of person to engage in the gCod practice

In Dharmasenghe's commentary to Machig's text entitled *The Twenty-One Commitments*[1] , he quotes Machig as saying that there are sixteen qualities which the practitioner of gCod should try to increase. These are:

1. a relaxed body
2. gentle speech
3. tamed mind
4. great faith
5. great generosity
6. intact commitments
7. bravery
8. conviction for the practice
9. ability to bear troubles
10. confidence that one can accomplish the practice

[1] *Commentary on 21 Commitments*, fol. 21.

11. perseverance in the practice

12. definite ascertainment of the meaning of gCod

13. love

14. compassion

15. Bodhicitta

16. wisdom of Emptiness.

Machig is also quoted as saying that the student who is a "golden vessel for this practice" is one who has "faith, perseverance, great wisdom, a courageous heart endowed with deep respect for the gCod, a strong and persevering heart that is able to bear difficulties and exert great effort, one who has great patience, and little pride, greed, deceit, jealousy, attachment or hatred, one who has great faith in the Guru and fear of death and rebirth." [1].

Further, in *The Guide for Those Desiring Liberation* by Panchen Lobsang Chökyi Gyältsen we read that:

> "The person should be one who looks at the goodness of existence as a plaintain tree (without essence), and should be one who has become a slave of loving kindness and compassion and keeps in mind the full enlightenment of Buddhahood. This gCod is meant for those who wish to destroy from the root the seeds of Samsāra. Therefore, please understand that having thoughts of

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[1]As quoted in Dharmasenghe, *Commentary on 21 Commitments*, pp. 15 - 21.

> receiving offerings, desiring a good reputation and therefore taking interest in performing aggressive acts against worldly gods and demons, these are the very opposite of this practice of gCod."[1]

In an interview with the Venerable Zong Rinpoche in India, 1980, he stated that the person who wishes to take up the gCod practice should be trained the Lam Rim (the gradual stages on the path), and should be trained in the three aspects of the path, i.e. renunciation, Bodhicitta and wisdom realizing Emptiness. He stressed that one should not perform the gCod for the purpose of fame or for overpowering demons and gods or in order to receive offerings. "One must have a good motivation, that is the Bodhicitta motivation, and should not be trying to cause disturbances."

And Lobsang Tsultrim, in his commentary on *The Guide for Those Desiring Liberation,* (pp. 201-2) states that a person who would be qualified for the practice is one who has trained in the stages of the Lam Rim, starting from the very beginning, from the practice of Guru devotion to the practice of insight meditation.

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[1]See English translation in part 3 of this work. Also, *Thar 'dod ded dpon* in Kachen Sopa's *dga' ldan snan-bgyud kyi gcod kyi gdams pa'i A Collection of the dge lugs pa tradition on the good (sic -- i.e. gCod) practice*, pp. 105-137, in *Collected Works of Bka'-chen Blo-bzan-bzod-pa*, Vol. IV, Delhi, Dorje Tsering, 1985, p. 106.

It should be a person who has received special oral experiential teachings from a very highly qualified master and should be trained in the common paths. As this practice is especially connected with the Mother Tantra, the best would be to have an initiation into a highest yoga tantra practice of the Mother Tantra, such as Cakrasaṁvara, and then the person must receive the initiation of the sky opener and should abide well by the commitments. And, as this teaching is the teaching of the Ḍākinīs, if possible one should receive the initiation of the five peaceful ḍakinis and the five wrathful ḍakinis.Then the person should learn exactly how the body should be, how the melodies of the speech should be, and the details of the mind. These should be learned from a master who is well experienced in the lineage and the practice. One should receive commentary and oral instructions on the subject of the uncertainty of the time of death and the fact that death is certain, so that one thinks at all times, in whatever place one resides, that there is no certainty regarding when one is going to die and there is no help at the time of death other than the practice of Dharma. So one should be fully enjoined to practice Dharma and should abandon all the worldly and unwholesome activities and should be motivated to achieve the fully accomplished state of Buddhahood. That is the type of person who is suited for this practice.

On the other hand, a person who seeks only for this life and who seeks fame and wealth, even if he trains in this path, is not suitable for the gCod practice in the least. A person who is endowed with a mind of renunciation, Bodhicitta and the right view is a suitable vessel for this practice."

4. THE RITUAL

4.1. Requirements for the Practice of the gCod meditation ritual

The Venerable Zong Rinpoche related that in order to do the practice of gCod, one needs to have:

1. the initiation
2. the special oral instructions about the practice from the Guru
3. the instructions regarding the visualizations
4. the melodies for practicing the gCod *sadhana* (meditation manuals).[1]

When one has the above-mentioned requirements, then one may perform the actual meditation ritual of the gCod, of which there are many examples. The ritual text should preferably be memorized, so that one will not have to rely on the text when practicing at night in isolated places. The practitioner also learns the complicated melodies and various patterns of the *damaru*, as well as the technique for playing the thighbone instrument.[2]

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[1]personal communication, India, 1980.

[2]It should be mentioned that the gCod is first and foremost a mental practice, and that the emphasis should always be on the mental training. The instruments and melodies are ancillary, but helpful, aspects of the ritual. One

As the gCod melodies are said to produce a very good effect on the mind of the practitioner and those around, they have been an integral part of the tradition. We find connections here with early Buddhism, verbal recitation and repetition in the *Visuddhimagga*, and so forth, as mentioned in previous sections.[1]

It must be stressed here that of primary importance is the internal transformation. As the Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche points out, "One can tame the demons without using melodies or *damarus*. Buddha Sakyamuni tamed the demons as he was sitting in Bodh Gaya under the Bodhi tree. We could say that he was practicing gCod, but he did not sing nor did he play ritual instruments. Nevertheless he cut the demons. Machig Labdron would never have said that Buddha Sakyamuni, and likewise, Milarepa, were not practicing gCod."[2]

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may even do the gCod practice without uttering one word or playing one beat of the damaru. But the essential thing that one may not leave out is the proper motivation of Bodhicitta and the meditation on Emptiness. These two are actually the essence of the practice of gCod. (Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, public discourse on gCod, Switzerland, 1985).

[1]See also Ter Ellingson, *The Mandala of Sound*, Ph.D. dissertation, Madison, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1979.

[2]personal communication, Switzerland, 1990.

4.1.1. *The initiations*

4.1.1.1. *The prerequisite common Sky Opener Initiation*

The Venerable Zong Rinpoche explained that the Sky-opener Initiation, in Tibetan *nam mkha sgo 'byed,* is the prerequisite for engaging in the practice of gCod. This is the initiation which Machig is said to have received from Phadampa Sangye's disciple sKyo ston so nam bla ma. It forms a part of Phadampa's text cycle the *'brul tsho drug pa.* There are many versions of the initiation still available.[1]

"After one has this initiation," he stated, "one may practice any gCod, Nyingma, Kargyud, Sakya or Geluk."[2]

According to the rGyal-ba Ensapa lineage, the initiation of the five peaceful Dākinīs is the Nam mkha sgo 'byed[3].

[1]See, for example, Panchen bLo bzang Chos kyi rGyal tshan's *gCod dbang nam mkha sgo byed*, Thu'ukwan bLo bzang chos kyi nyi ma, *gCod dbang nam mkha' sgo byed kyi dbang chos kyi sgo 'byed pa'i lde mig*, mss. in personal collection of Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, and Taranatha, *gCod yul-gyi-dbang-nam-mkha-sgo-'byed-du grags-pa*, in *gdams ngag mdzod*, compiled by 'Jam-mgon Kon-sprul-blo-gros-mtha'-yas, Vol. 9, N. Lungtok and N. Gyaltsan, Delhi, 1971, pp. 803-812.

[2]public discourse, Los Angeles, 1980.

[3]personal communication, Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, 1990.

4.1.1.2. The optional initiation of the wrathful five Dākinīs

There is also the initiation of the wrathful Ḍākinī, Trosma Nagmo, and her entourage of four, totalling five wrathful Ḍākinīs. Another Trosma Nagmo initiation is the Nine Deity Wrathful Black Goddess initiation. In addition there is the uncommon single deity Trosma Nagmo initiation[1]. This blue-black, ferocious goddess forms an integral part of the gCod sadhanas. There are numerous sadhanas, initiations and retreat practices of this goddess. There is also a Trosma Nagmo text from the tradition of Phadampa Sangye (the Zhi-byed).[2]

4.2 The Ritual Itself

Part 2 of the dissertation presents the gCod ritual according to Chapter 5 of the work entitled *Phungpo gzan skyur gyi rnam bshad gcod kyi don gsal, The Illuminating Explanation of the gCod "Throwing out the Body as Food"*,

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[1]See the lineage of this initiation as received by Phabongkha Dechen Nyingpo, in his *san yig*, *Collected Works of Pha-bon-kha-pa byams-pa bstan-dzin phrin-las-rgya-mtsho*, Vol. 1, N. Delhi, 1973, p. 141.

[2]Xeroxed manuscript in the possession of Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche.

commonly referred to as the *Namshä Chenmo*", a compilation of the hagiography and teachings of Machig Labdron in ten chapters. Chapter 5 of the *Namshä Chenmo* is the chapter from which the entire text of ten chapters has received its name, and is an account of the gCod ritual. It includes recitation verses to be performed as *sädhana* as well as prose commentary on the recitations and visualizations.

And in Part 3 we find the recitation manuals of the gCod practice by Panchen Lobsang Chokyi Gyaltsen, Thu'u kwan, dNgul-chu Dharmabhadra and Zong Rinpoche, as well as a detailed commentary on the stages of the gCod ritual by Tsongkhapa which includes recitation passages as well.

Here we present an outline of the ritual as explained in the text attributed to Machig Labdron. It may be noted that these elements of the ritual are found in all the manuals we have presented here. They differ in terms of their elaborateness, but the essential meaning remains intact.

In Chapter 5 of the *Namshä Chenmo*, the actual process of the ritual is outlined as follows:

1. in the beginning one should generate the mind of Enlightenment and collect the guests

2. visualize the objects of refuge and train the mind in the four

immeasurables and invite the field of assembly

3. do the eight-limbed prayer with prostrations and offerings
4. separate the mind and body and offer the mandala
5. make requests and receive the blessings
6. make the offering of the body and practice giving
7. conclude by way of making dedication and prayers.

Also, before beginning, one should examine the frightening place carefully, and subdue it place with one's visualization. Then, one should sit on a comfortable seat and generate the mind of enlightenment with eight main objects in mind, and also for the purpose of all other living beings. These eight are: those enemies who hate one, interferers who harm, secondary conditions which interfere, karmic interferers, bodily interferers, interferers at scary places, one's own mother, one's own father."[1]

An integral part of the recitation is the syllable *Phat*, which is recited through the ritual. The meaning of the syllable is traditionally said to be that the two letters which make up the syllable. Pha and Ta are said to represent

[1]These eight types of guests are explained in detail in the *Namshä Chenmo*, p. 153.

Sutra (Phar-phyin) and Tantra respectively.[1]

There is a work ascribed to Phadampa Sangye regarding this *Phat*, entitled *Phat-chos rin-chen 'phreng ba*[2], which Je Tsongkhapa has also relied on in writing his commentary (see Part three of this work):

The text of Phadampa Sangye states:

"As for the three objects of generating the *Phat*:

1. If there is attachment and clinging generated towards external objects, say *Phat*.

2. If there are delusions generated in the mind which grasps internally, say *Phat*.

3. If sinking and agitation in meditation on the secret level, say *Phat*.

As for the three aids for increase:

1. Say *Phat* to increase one's blessings at the time of meeting one's Guru.

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[1]Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, public discourse, Switzerland, 1985.

[2]Phadampa Sangye (Dampa Rinpoche), *Phat chos rin chen phreng ba*, in *gCod tshogs kyi lag len sogs A Collection of gCod Texts representing the ancient practices of the adepts of the tradition. Reproduced directly from a rare manuscript collection from Limi, Nepal.* Bir, D. Tsondu Senghe, 1985, pp. 546-549.

2. Say *Phat* to increase virtuous activities at the time of staying in retreat.

3. Say *Phat* to increase merit at the time of making torma and Ganacakra offerings.

As for the three times for generating brilliance:

1. When among many others, say *Phat* to strengthen the rigpa (mind) (like putting on iron fortification).

2. Say *Phat* to overcome those who are harmful.

3. Say *Phat* to overcome the three realms and generate brilliance.

As for the three confidences of the View:

1. Say *Phat* for the three times free of extremes (Emptiness).

2. Say *Phat* for the understanding (realization) of Emptiness which is without memory and without true existence.

3. Say *Phat* for the spontaneous, aimless realization.

As for the three modes of meditation.

1. When you are in the market, meditate on the Guru on the crown of your head and say *Phat*.

2. When you are sitting alone, meditate on death continuously and say *Phat*.

3. When engaged in activities, meditate that these activities are for the welfare of living beings and say *Phat*.

As for the three non-definitenesses of cutting.

1. With respect to the time, nothing is definite; one can say *Phat* anytime.

2. Regarding the place, nothing is definite; say *Phat* anywhere.

3. As for the friends, nothing is definite; say *Phat*.

As for the three fruits of attainment:

1. Realizing that there is no production and no cessation in the mind leads to the resultant state of Dharmakāya -- say *Phat*.

2. Understanding that speech is not inherently existence leads to the resultant Complete Enjoyment Body of the Buddha (Sambhogakāya) -- say *Phat*.

3. The ability of the body to accomplish the purpose of living beings leads to the attainment of the resultant Nirmānakāya -- say *Phat*.

The three times of Remembrance:

1. At the time of making requests, remember the Guru and say *Phat*.

2. When meditating on the generation stage, remember one's meditational deity (yidam) and say *Phat*.

3. When meditating on the completion stage, remember emptiness and

say *Phat*.

As for the three Secrets:

1. When the body is feeling sunken and foggy, remove those (feelings) through prostrations and circumambulations and say *Phat*.

2. If the voice is sunk, recite the essence mantra and say *Phat*.

3. If mentally sunk, clear your samadhi -- say *Phat*.

As for the three transformations:

1. Transform all the actions of the ordinary body -- *Phat*.

2. Transform all senseless talk -- *Phat*.

3. Transform all conceptions of the mind -- *Phat*.

As for the three uninterrupted streams:

1. Say *Phat* and never interrupt the virtuous activities of the body.

2. Say *Phat* and never interrupt mantra recitation.

3. Say *Phat* and never interrupt your mental concentration.

As for the three means of gaining certainty:

1. The basic characteristic is that there is no view -- *Phat*.

2. Seeing the root, there is no meditation -- *Phat*.

3. Not realizing the meaning, there is no fruit -- *Phat*.

4.3. *Ritual Objects*

In the texts attributed to Machig Labdron that we have had the opportunity to read, we have found mention of two ritual objects, the *damaru* (drum) and the *rkang-ling* (thighbone instrument), in *The Eight Extraordinary Chapters*, where both instruments are mentioned.[1] In Chapter 4 of the *Namshä Chenmo*, the *rkang-ling* instrument is described in detail, along with the ways it should be blown.

In later writings we have found more detail on the various objects used in the ritual practices, including the retreat practices, and so we have examined them briefly in this section.

We have found complete texts devoted to the description of the ritual objects and of their symbolism, for example, "The Analysis of the gCod Ḍamaru", and the verse text on ritual objects by Lobsang Tsultrim. Dharmasenghe also writes extensively on the ritual objects in his work *sprospa nyer bzhi*.

We will not discuss all the objects in detail here, but will give a detailed description of the *damaru* and *rkang-ling*, to illustrate our observation that the

[1]*thun mong ma yin pa'i le lag rgyad (The Eight Extraordinary Chapters)* in *gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 14, p. 146. See translation in Part 2 of this work.

ritual objects are imbued with a detailed symbolic meaning that is used to further enhance the meditator's practice.

The tradition of the *ḍamaru* for Machig's tradition, relates Dharmasenghe, is that it should be made of wood, either *sengdeng*, *akara*, or sandalwood, at best. But at the least, it should be from a fragrant fruit tree with no thorns.[1]

The size of the *ḍamaru*, according to Machig's tradition, should have a diameter the length of one's foot. According to the tradition of Phadampa Sangye, it should be the size of 'tru-gang", (about one foot. this is a Tibetan term for measurement, which means the length from the tip of the fingers to the elbow). It should be not smaller than the expanse from the thumb to the middle finger.[2]

The wood, relates Dharmasenghe, is a sign of holding the path of the Buddha. The empty stomach of the sides of the *damaru* is a sign of having the view of Emptiness. The writing on the inside of the ḍamaru indicates

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[1]Wood from a tree with thorns is considered a wrathful substance, and therefore would not be suitable for the practice of gCod.

[2]Dharmasenghe, *sprospa nyer bzhi*, fol. 55.

compassion[1]. The strap between the two sides of the *ḍamaru* indicates the belt of morality. The two beaters on either side symbolize method and wisdom. The small shell piece at the botton of the strap symbolitzes that one is obstructed one from going to the three lower realms of rebirth. The ring on the strap symbolizes the request to the Gurus to turn the wheel of Dharma. The small piece of tiger skin attached to the *damaru* symbolizes bringing the *Viras* under one's power. The small piece of *zig* skin on the left side, symbolizes bringing the Ḍākinīs under one's power. The hair of a dead person which should be attached to the *ḍamaru* is a sign that one has to remember impermanence. The hair of a living person which should be attached as well, serves as a reminder that one should take all negative occurences onto the path. The silver mirror attached symbolizes the clear light of emptiness that shines in the mind. The banner of five colors symbolizes the five bodies and five wisdoms. The bells[2] attached symbolize the teachings going out in the ten

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[1]Normally a mantra of the Ḍākinīs is written on the wood inside the hollow sides of the damaru (Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, Switzerland, 1985).

[2]According to Lobsang Tsultrim (blo bzang Tshul 'khrims), in his commentary to the Thar 'dod de dpon *gCod dbang thar 'dod ded dpon ma'i dgong don gsal ba'i me-long*, the small bells attached to the *ḍamaru* are there to please oneself and others and as an offering to the ḍakinis. Nevertheless, he stresses, it is very important not to be influenced by the eight worldly dharmas

directions.[1]

There are various rhythmic patterns found in the different traditions. We have had the opportunity to record the oral instructions regarding the rhythm patterns of the Ensapa Whispered Lineage, as taught by the Venerable Zong Rinpoche.

There are five different patterns, as one can see in the text in part 3 by Venerable Zong Rinpoche. They include:

1. ma-dang-lha-yi-khan-dro (ma dang lha yi mkha'-'gro)
2. chom den dä (com dan das)
3. ma-dang-khan-dro (ma dang mkha' 'gro)
4. khan-dro khan-dro (mkha'-'gro mkha'-'gro)
5. drum-drum (brum brum)

We find similar patterns described in Dharmasenghe's text *sprospa nyer zhi* in reference to the Nyingma tradition, to Dharmasenghe's own tradition and

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(wanting fame, wealth, praise and pleasure, and wanting to avoid bad reputation, little means, criticism and pain). P. 211.

[1]Dharmasenghe, *sprospa nyer bzhi*, fol. 55. Dharmasenghe indicates that these are the teachings of Machig. One would assume that there is a text by Machig on the subject, as he indicates that he has seen Machig's writings regarding the tent used during the outdoor retreat practices, fol 58.b) but we have not located these texts as yet.

to the tradition according to Thangton Gyalpo.[1]

Lobsang Tsultrim writes that "the *ḍamaru* should be played while thinking that it produces the profound sound of emptiness. Playing with that understanding helps to incite the mind of the Gurus, yidams, Buddhas, etc., who delightedly confer all types of attainment (*siddhis*) and superior activities on the yogi. Through hearing the pleasant sound of the ḍamaru a special imprint of Dharma is left on the mindstreams of all the assembly of gods, humans, and even birds and animals.The way to play the trumpet and damaru for the peaceful practice of gcod should be pleasant and slow. At the time of wrathful practice it should be rough and quick."[2]

"Kachen Sopa points out in his commentary on the *Thar 'dod de dpon* that the color of the wood of the *ḍamaru* should be red. If it could not be the red color of sandalwood or red sengdeng wood, then, it should be dyed with red vegetable dye. He states that according to Khedrubje's *rnal 'byor rol pa'i dga' ston*, the *ḍamaru* is needed in (tantric) rituals because, the sound of the *ḍamaru* serves to remind one of Emptiness, and by means of this recollection, the sound

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[1]*sprospa nyer bzhi*, fol. 55b.

[2]*gCod gzhung thar 'dod ded dpon ma'i dgongs dgongs don gsal-ba'i me-long*, p. 211.

of the wisdom of the indivisible wisdom and bliss arises, pleasing the Gurus, and all the assembly of meditational deities of the mandala, etc., which is the meaning of the offering, and thereby one is granted blessings and attainments. Then, this sound calls out to the hearts of all the viras and yoginīs and they come quickly and grant blessings and power. And with this sound, the dakinis and dharma protectors are enjoined to enact virtuous activities.[1] Kachen Sopa adds that similarly in the case of gCod, one should think that all the six realms of beings, including all the interferences and interferers, hearing that sound which shows that all phenomena do not inherently exist, come quickly and come from afar. They all become separated from grasping at (persons and phenomena) as truly existent, and quickly attain the state of liberation.[2]

Ter Ellingson points out in his doctoral dissertation *The Mandala of Sound*, that according to Bu-ston's commentary (1337: 783ff.), the notations describing the beats of the drum "are words derived from mantras appropriate to the Modes of Action, for example *Sam pa ta* for Pacifying, from *sam*, to be "pacifed", and *Kha tvam* for Fierce, from *khatvanga*. In fact, all the syllables

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[1]*gcod kyi gdams pa thar 'dod ded dpon gyi tshig don rab tu gsal ba blo-bzang dgongs rgyan*, pp. 165-378, *The Collected Works of dKa'-chen blo-bzan-bzod-pa*, Vol. IV, p. 181.

[2]ibid, p. 184.

which represent drum beats in this example are integral and meaningful parts of the verbal mantras of the ritual...thus, it is obvious that the syllables are not simply notational symbols for independently preexisting musical sounds, but, on the contrary, the drum is being used to "speak" the ritual words in a mathematically regularized form."[1]

We find evidence that this may also be the case at the time of the gCod practice. The Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche has pointed out that "if one listens to the beats of the ḍamaru, one will hear it calling the Ḍākinīs".[2]

The gCod *ḍamaru* is similar in construction to the Indian drum *chang te'u* used by Yogis and Mahāsiddhas. It was most likely introduced to the gCod ritual by Machig based on her knowledge of the Mahāsiddha tradition, and not through the influence of the Bon.[3]

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[1]Ter Ellingson, *The Mandala of Sound*, pp. 201-202.

[2]personal communication, Switzerland, 1989.

[3]The drum which was widely used in the Bon is a drum which one hangs from the ceiling and beats with a separate beater, and is not the type of drum with a neck, as the Indian tantric *chang-te'u* and the gCod damaru. Ter Ellingson points out that, according to a twelfth-century rediscovered text, *Nyang gi Bka'thang*, p. 551, Padmasambhava left this instruction for Tibetan followers of the Tantras: "For Ritual Action [chants], do not use *Bon gyer* the chanting (*gyer*) must be in accord with the meditation." Likewise Bon ritual implements would not have been a popular choice for use in the gCod ritual.

Regarding the historical origins of the use of the thighbone instrument (*rkang-gling*), Ter Ellingson points out that he has found no evidence for the use of human bones in religious rituals of pre-Buddhist Tibet. He finds, rather, that the use of bones in rituals is a practice which can be traced to Indian *Kapālikas* and *Kalamūkhas* and other yogic traditions of India. Padmasambhava is said to have brought the use of such bone instruments from India to Tibet.[1]

Machig gives a very detailed explanation of the proper type of *rkang ling* for use in the gCod ritual (see Chapter 5 of the *Namshä Chenmo* in Part 2 of this work). Machig stresses, however, that "if one wants to keep a thighbone trumpet, it must have the wholesome attributes, as different types of kanglings will call different types of beings, Machig points out."[2]

Regarding for the instructions on how it should be played, we read in the *Namshä Chenmo* that when a proper kangling is used, the first time it is blown one needs to think in this way:

> The tone of the thighbone trumpet should enjoins all to listen. It should be fine and taut, yet pleasant. It should go to all

[1]*The Mandala of Sound*, p. 222. See also pp. 195-196, 210ff and 567.

[2]*Namshä Chenmo*, p. 155.

> three realms of life with such a (loud) tone that it is heard by all the realms of life. It should have the effect that whoever is engaged in activities will stop whatever they are doing and listen with open ears and interest. They will instantly have the wish to come to that place from where the sound comes. With the second blow, one should think that the kangling has the tone which says oh, 'everyone should gather here.' Think that the sound has been understood in that way, and there is a great rushing about and much movement as each one comes from its own place. Then with the third blow, all are collected with a rush and noise and appear in front of oneself like a big gathering of people in front of a tree, all showing respect and faith to oneself and offering homage. Then, one should say three times, and do the same three visualizations as one does when blowing the *rkangling* three times."[1]

Other objects used in the gCod ritual are described by Dharmasenghe in the text *sprospa nyer zhi*[2] and in Lobsang Tsultrim's verse text, *bya btang yo-byad da ma ru dang grva phat, 'khol-me, chog-pu, rkang gling bcas kyi bshad pa.*[3]

4.4. What kind of signs occur through this practice

When the gCodpa has exerted some effort in the practice and when this

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[1]Namshe Chenmo, p. 157.

[2]Dharmasenghe, *spros-pa nyer zhi*, fols. 55-58.

[3]In *The Collected Works (gsun 'bum) of 'bron-rtse yons-'dzin blo-bzan-tshul-khrims*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1981, pp. 287-299.

effort has been effective, then the desired effects begin to be produced. At this time, the yogi experiences various occurences which are said to be caused by the gods and demons whom he has gathered together during the ritual. They are divided into three or sometimes four categories.

In the *Namshä Chenmo*, the description given by Machig Labdron is that when the demons and gods start making small intereferences, one becomes slightly uncomfortable, and this is known as a sign of the *arisal of indications* (*lhongs*)[1]. This is referred to in other commentaries by another term (*slong*), which can be defined in nearly the same way.[2]

At this time the gods and demons are said to act in various extraordinary ways in order to interfere with one's practice, for example, they may appear in visions or in dreams as frightening beings, or may cause the meditator to feel suddenly afraid or unhappy. These actions are known as the *'magical' manifestations (cho 'phrul).*[3] The yogi should be on guard for these 'magical'

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[1]See dpa'bo rdo-rje, *'jam dbyangs chos skor bris mar bzhugs-pa'i gcod rtsa-don-tshan-gsum*, pp. 91-104, in *Collected Works of bka'-chen blo-bzang bzod-pa*, 98ff.

[2]See, for example, the gCod commentary of Je Tshongkhapa, *zab lam gCod kyi khrid yig ma ti bha dra kirtis sbyar ba*, p. 40, where the term *slong* is used.

[3]These are explained in detail in Chapters Seven (pp. 287-293) and Eight of the *Namshä Chenmo*, pp. 311ff.

occurences, and at the time of their appearance, he/she should recognize them as such. If he is able to successfully fight them off, the demons and gods will then be under one's service, and one will receive certain worldly attainments. At this time the yogi must exercise care not to be taken in by these experiences and should not see them as something very great.

It is said to be extremely important that one should not see any of these 'magical manifestations' as something great, and should not come under the influence of the demon of joy, but should simply meditate on the emptiness of that experience. Then, the yogi will be able to fight off such occurences, and the demons will be under one's serivce. These signs will occur at the time before one actually starts to get positive realizations. And when the yogi responds correctly to these 'magical' occurences, then, when it is definite that one has achieved inner realizations in the practice, there will come about the occurences of *measurements of one's having put an end to one's being under the influence of the gods and demons (tshar tshad).* At that time, the demons will start listening to the yogi and doing as the yogi instructs, and in addition will grant worldly attainments to that yogi. At time of receiving these *tshar chad*, or measurements of having cut, one will have certain dreams and visions.

In addition, the demons and interferences themselves will not only begin

losing their previous negative attitudes, but will begin doing good actions and will reach the state where it is clear that in the future they also will definitely attain liberation. The progress of these demons and interferences will produce special effects for that yogi as well.

At that time, the yogi cuts off the self-grasping which was the cause of the generation of various wrong conceptions in the past, and thereby directly perceives Emptiness. And for the purpose of others, the yogi endeavors to lead these demons and interferences, and all living beings to liberation. At this time, occurences known as 'measurements of having cut' (*chod-tshad)* will take place.[1]

Je Tsongkhapa explains these arisals, magical manifestations and measurements in detail in his gCod commentary, and also gives various methods for how to deal with them, depending on the status of the yogi (See part 3 of this work for translation.).

Āryadeva, in the *Tshigs bcad Chenmo,* states that the person with superior intelligence should place all those occurences which may arise either in dreams or in reality, in the state of nonduality by meditating on Emptiness. The person of middling intellect should perform special meditations for those

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[1]*Namshä Chenmo*, 290ff.

occurences.[1] The person of least intellect should "analyze those occurences (check to see if they are real or not,) and then should separate the body and mind.[2] Then an experience of selflessness, free of the doubts of conceptuality will arise. One should see the body as if it is a stone. In this way no harm could possibly occur to that body, and the consciousness is like invisible space. Therefore who could harm you? So, one should think in that way and should leave one's consciousness in the sphere of the Dharmadhatu, without anxiety or fear."

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[1]These are explained in the gCod commentary by Je Tsongkhapa and by his direct disciple, Lodro Bäpa sNar-thang-pa grags-pa dpal), in the text *gCod kyi gdams ngag phul byung gser-gyi phreng-ba*, pp. 151-180 in *gCod tshogs*, 168ff.

[2]In the gCod Commentary *zab lam gCod kyi khrid yig* of Je Tsongkhapa, the quote from the *Tshigs bcad Chenmo* reads: tha mas *de la rtags dpyad dbya/* de rjes rig pa *lus* rten dang/ bral ba'i nyams ni skye bar 'gyur/ See p. 38, in *gCod tshogs*.

The variant as quoted by in the *Gdams ngag mdzod*, *Tangyur* (Peking vol. 146, p. 172) and in *gCod gyi chos skor*, reads: "tha mas *phung po gzan du bsgyur/* de rjes rig pa *blo* rten dang bral ba'i nyams ni skye bar 'gyur". 'The last type of person (with least intellence) should transform the aggregates into food, after that one will experience that the mind does not depend on the intellect), and an experience of selflessness, free of the doubts of conceptuality will arise." In this case, however, it would be more easily understood as found in Je Tsongkhapa's gCod Commentary, *rigpa lus rten dang bral ba'i*, that, after separating the body and mind, one will experience that the "mind does not rely on the body."

5. Function of gCod in Society, Suggestions for further research and Conclusion

From Machig Labdron's time to the present literally hundreds of texts have been written, for the gCod tradition has remained extremely popular among both monastic and laity. Practitioners of gCod were called upon to perform various functions in the community, that of philosopher, healer, teacher and Vajra master.

As well, gCod practitioners were called upon to ensure the smooth functioning of funeral rituals, and also played an important part in the community. Their meditative expertise was called upon at times of emergencies such as troubles with demons, weather (hail storms, lack of rainfall, etc).

It can be noted that the way in which the gCod practice meets the needs of both laity and monastic communities points to its strong Mahāyāna foundings and background in the Siddha tradition. Perhaps this is a reason for the extreme popularity of gCod and its endurance throughout the centuries in Tibet.

In the multiplicity of its functions we find the reason for the wide range of styles of texts produced by the gCod tradition. For even among the works of Machig we find a wide range of styles of literature, from the philosophical treatises in verse style, such as the *Katshom Chenmo*, to the popular oral

teachings as told by Machig in the *Phung po gzan bskyur gyi rnam bshad gCod kyi don gsal* (*Namshä Chenmo*) to the question-and-answer style prose texts such as the *Yangtshom*, a series of questions posed by her son and disciple Gyalwa Dondrub, and the instruction manual and descriptive prose text, the *Nyingtshom*. As we have not located all the texts which are attributed to Machig Labdron at present[1], we must hope that there still exist manuscripts of these works, and that these important works will soon become available so that further research can be carried out surveying the complete literature produced by this important scholar and yoginī.

Following Machig's time, the gCod tradition has produced a vast literature, and to date little primary resource material has been translated. Much work needs to be done in this area, but for the purposes of this dissertation we have limited the discussion mainly to the textual material which discusses the meditation ritual itself and the manuals for practice, as described

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[1]The texts of Machig's which we have been able to consult for this study include the *Katshom Chenmo*, the *Yang tshoms*, the *Nying tshoms*, the *Thun mong gi le lag rgyas*, *Thun mong ma yin pa'i le lag rgyas*, *khyad par gi le lag rgyas*, the *Namshä Chenmo* and the *zhal gdams bdud rtsi'i 'phreng ba* (see bibliography and Introduction to part 2 of this work for complete listing of these texts) and the *Damtshig nyi shu tsa gcig*, as found in Dharmasenghe's commentary on that text. As we have found no other copy other than what Dharmasenghe quotes, we do not know whether it represents the complete text of the *Damtshig nyi shu tsa gcig*.

by Machig in the work entitled *The Eight Extraordinary Chapters* and in the *Namshä Chenmo*.

We have observed through our study of the literature of gCod and the observance of the ritual itself that there are various texts written and rituals available to meet various occasions. For example, the gCod may be especially practiced in order to eliminate interferences which may be plaguing a family or a community. For this purpose, texts such as *gCod as a ritual for taming interferences* (*dga po gnad du 'bebs pa'i gshed 'dul mtshon cha 'khor lo*) by the twentieth century Kham master, Geshe Champa Khedrup, have been written. (n.p. n.d., private collection, Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche.)

Machig herself has written special instructions for how to heal a sick person or child, as we find in Chapter Seven of her text *The Eight Extraordinary Chapters* (*Thun mong gi le lag rgyas*). Texts like this, or portions of texts, by later authors, have been devoted to this same subject, such as Je Tsongkhapa's *Commentary on gCod* in part three of this work.

There are texts written for the practice of gCod in mountain retreats, or for seven-day retreats, or for retreat practices to be done at waterfalls. There are also special texts written to be used at the officiation of funeral rites.

A study of the literature of the gCod will be of particular interest to

historians of religions, as it contains within one system both literature written for the monastic and lay scholars and educated, and literature which comes from the oral tradition, for the common people. Of interest as well is that even within the literature ascribed to Machig Labdron herself, we find both literature which has its origins in writing and in oral tradition.

We know that Machig Labdron was famous for delivering her teachings to large crowds of followers, who came from all parts of Tibet, and even from Nepal and India, sometimes necessitating the use of several translators, some of which she later wrote down herself, or others wrote down for her.

In conclusion, the study of the figure of Machig Labdron as a scholar and yoginī and a study of the philosophy and ritual aspects of the tradition will be of interest to many. For those interested in women's studies, Machig Labdron is a unique female figure in the history of Tibetan Buddhism. To date western scholarship has not produced an extensive study of any other female figure in the history of Tibetan Buddhism, nor perhaps in Buddhism in general, nor have we access to translations of philosophical treatises written by women in Buddhism, and in fact in philosophy in general there is a paucity of materials of this kind. Therefore further attempts to locate, edit, and translate the works of Machig Labdron will be a significant contribution to the field of women's

studies. It is our hope to continue this work, and that many others in the fields of Tibetology, Buddhist Studies, Philosophy, Literature of South Asia, History of Religions, Women's Studies, Folkore Studies, Musicology and Anthropology will pursue research in this area.

Machig Labdron wanted to teach and to be of service to all those who were in need, the rich, the poor, the healthy, the ill, the educated and the uneducated. Her teachings were taken up enthusiastically by all schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Fittingly, she has left behind a heritage which provides rich material for research to meet the interests of many different disciplines of study.

It may not be too bold to propose that political scientists, psychologists, and musical therapists, would benefit from a study of the teachings of Machig Labdron, for they provide a method which combines head, heart and physical world, and could be of lasting value for a society if thoroughly explored and understood.

As a contribution toward a better understanding of the gCod tradition of Machig Labdron and her followers, we present in Parts Two and Three translations of her works and of those who followed after her. We have found it important to present a number of texts representing the gCod tradition,

including texts written by Machig Labdron and her followers, in order to provide a broad and firm foundation from which to pursue further study. As one can see from the texts presented in Part Three, these followers of Machig Labdron's gCod tradition present the gCod practice in a very similar manner to Machig's, and express the same concerns and conviction.

It is our hope that this present work as well portrays the gCod Tradition of Machig Labdron accurately and clearly, and will be of interest to those who wish to further investigate this subject.

Part Two

Introduction to the Writings of Machig Labdron

We do not have a definitive listing of the complete works of Machig Labdron at present, due in part to the fact that presently no text containing her collected works has been located. Whether there indeed was such a work in the past is an open question, but we know that during the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1959 or shortly thereafter, Machig Labdron's nunnery was destroyed, and it is likely that the texts which were housed there were also destroyed. To date, no such collection has been found, nor have informants whom we have asked about the matter been aware of any such collected works.

In addition to the ensuing uncertainty as to which texts remain extant, the several accounts we have available which list Machig Labdron's writings, in fact differ considerably from one to the next. Therefore we can assume that the present problem we have experienced in formulating a definitive list of the writings of Machig Labdron has in fact been experienced by traditional scholars historically.

We know that Machig's writings were written down by various disciples,

and sometimes not in their entirety. As Machig Labdron herself related, "Anyone who wishes to can write down my words, on stone, cloth or rock, and carry them away.[1]

According to the histories, two of her disciples, sTong sde and sgrol sde, concerned about what would happen to the writings of Machig when she was no longer with them, asked if they could write down her texts in a more complete fashion, and she agreed.[2]

But of course, many texts must have circulated based on what her students had written down from her oral teachings. Thus we find, for example, two completely different texts, under two very similar names, the *bKa' tshoms Chenmo* (in the *gdams ngag mdzod* collection) and again the *bKa' tshoms Shulan.*[3]

At this stage in the research into the writings of Machig Labdron, it is difficult to come up with critical editions of Machig's work, due to the fact that

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[1]Dharmasenghe, *Commentary on the 21 Commitments*, fol. 84.

[2]Prajñsvabhava, *zab don thugs kyi snying po bla ma rgyud pa'i rnam thar*, pp. 83-96 in *gCod kyi gdams khrid lag len sogs*, Bir, D. Tsondu Senghe, 1985, p. 92.

[3]In *gCod skor*, compiled by rdo-rje glingpa, n.p., n.d., pp. 311-352. Also found in the collection called *ngos grub sgo 'byed*, pp. 1-31, under the title *bka' tshoms kyi zhu lan sum bcu rtsa lnga*, in *gCod kyi gdams khrid lag len sogs*, Bir, D. Tsondu Senghe, 1985, pp. 15-31.

we do not have several different versions of the same text available for comparison. The fact that her disciples wrote down various renditions of the same teaching and disseminated those handwritten words, and that her monastery, Zangs-ri khang-dmar, was destroyed by the Chinese at the time of the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1959 or shortly thereafter, presents us with further problems. If Zangs ri khang dmar were still intact today, perhaps we could have found the collected works of Machig which her two disciples had written down, the preparation of which Machig herself had possibly overseen.[1] But to date we have found no such collected works, and have had to search for single texts among other collections of texts and for references to her work among scholarly writings by later commentators.

Given these problems related to the textual materials, we have found that Tibetan scholars, aware of the earlier problems regarding to text transmission, have generally agreed on a classification of the texts attributed to Machig Labdron into two. These are the *khrigs-can* (systematic) and *khrigs-med* or *kha-*

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[1]In the case of Phadampa Sangye, for example, we have the relics and manuscripts at Langkhor, where Phadampa spent many years. See Barbara Aziz, in "Indian Philosopher as Tibetan Folk Hero", translation of the Legend of Lang-kor in *Central Asiatic Journal,* vol. 22. See also the collection of writings attributed to Phadampa Sangye's disciple, containing the teachings of Phadampa Sangye, B.N. Aziz (ed.), *The Tradition of Pha Dam-pa Sans-rgyas, Thimphu, Druk Sherik Parkhang, 1979, 5 vols.*

thor (scattered) teachings.[1]

These divisions indicate the teachings which are said to be Machig Labdron's writings based on her compilation of the words of the Buddha,[2] known as *khrigs-can*, and the special oral instructions taught by Machig Labdron to her disciples, known as *khrigs-med* or *kha-thor*. The following listing is taken from *The Ruby Garland* (p. 5ff).

I. The khrigs-can teachings

1. **The Outer Teachings** which are vast and detailed,

   the *bKa'-tshoms*[3]

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[1]sMon lam Thayas rGya mtsho, *Ma gcig mkha' 'gro snyan rgyud lam zab rgyun gyi rnal 'byor bde-bkod pa* in *gCod tshogs*, p.308. See also Dharmasenghe, *History*, pp. 542. Dharmasenghe gives the spelling of these terms as *ṭik-can* and *ṭik-med,* possibly a reference to with *(can)* and without *(med)* commentaries (Sanskrit, *tika*).

[2]bka' chen blo bzang bzod pa, *Ruby Garland*, p. 5. The terms *khrigs can* and *khrigs med* are not listed by bka' chen blo bzang bzod pa here, but as *khungs dang 'brel ba,* 'related to the original', i.e. words of the Buddha. We have compiled the list based on compilation of the lists as given by bka' chen blo bzang bzod pa and smon lam tha yas rgya mtsho.

[3]According to Longdol Lama (rlong rdol bla ma), the *bka'tshoms chen mo* was requested by Machig's attendant, Nye gnas ma, the *Yang tshoms nyer lnga* by Machig's son, grub po (rGyal ba don grub). Machig's disciple Nam mkha' dpal is said to have requested the *le lag brgyad ma, kong khol ma nyi shu,*

1. *Katshoms Chenmo (bKa' tshoms Chenmo)*[1]

2. *Yang tshoms*

3. *Nying tshoms.*

These texts are quoted from frequently by later commentators of gCod. It is said in various accounts that Machig taught the *Katshoms Chenmo* (and the *Chapters*) in Sanskrit to the three fast-footed Acaryas from India who came to Tibet together with Phadampa Sangye to listen to teachings Machig was giving. At that time there was a huge gathering of Tibetans as well, from Central, North, Amdo and Kham areas of Tibet. It is said that all generated great belief.

Machig knew that they were coming because they wanted to see about this gCod that was so popular in Tibet. The Indians were afraid that it was going to become so popular in Tibet that it would overpower the Indian Buddha Dharma with a kind of 'barbaric (indigineous) practice of Tibetan rituals'.[2]

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gdams pa skye med tshig chod, brda' chos and *la bzlo ba* (this is probably the same as *la bzla*, merely a different spelling, in *Tibetan Buddhist Studies of klon rdol bla ma nag dban blo bzan*, vol, 2, edited by Ven. Dalama, Mussourie, 1964, p. 147.

[1]trans. Carol Savvas and Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, unpublished manuscript, 1987. See also Italian translation, G. Orofino, *Contributo Allo Studio Dell'Insegnamento di Ma gcig Lab sgron*, Napoli, 1987, pp. 17-39.

[2]Dharmasenghe, *History*, pp. 470-471.

2. **The Inner Teachings** showing the special instructions in chapters, the *Lelag* and in Introductions (*sngo- sprod*)

1. The Le-Lag (Chapters)
    1. The elaborate Eight Common Chapters
    2. The unelaborate Eight Extraordinary Chapters
    3. The Brief Eight Special Chapters

According to the descriptions of these texts given in Kachen Sopa's *The Ruby Garland*[1], the *Eight Common Chapters* are unelaborate and explain how to subdue the Four Demons, like the sun shining in the sky; *the Eight Extraordinary Chapters* are elaborate, and explain how to cut the adverse conditions from the root; the *Eight Special Chapters* are brief, and explain how to change the demon of pride, by eating it, like (the peacock) transforms poisons into nectar.

2. *Ngo-sprod* (Introduction)

[1]bka'-chen blo-bzaṅ bzod-pa, *dga'ldan snyan brgyud kyi thabs shes gcod kyi gdams pa'i byung rabs pad rag gi 'phreng ba*, pp. 1-90 in *Collected Works of bKa'-chen blo-bzaṅ bzod-pa*, pp. 5-6.

1. Introduction to Emptiness, *Ye shes spyi lugs kyi ngosprod*

2. Introduction to the Mental Consciousness, *Kun gzhi sde skor gyi ngo sprod*

3. Introduction Showing the Six Things to be Known, *shes bya drug skor gyi ngo sprod*

3. **The Secret Teachings:** *Teachings of the Signs (bzla chos)* and *Gaining Certainty (la zlar bgyur pa)*

1. *Teachings of the Signs, brda-chos*

1. *The Sign of Separating the body and mind, bem rig bral ba'i brda*

2. *The Sign Mixing the Mind with the Sphere of Emptiness, sems chos bsres ba'i brda*

3. *The Sign of Placing all Dharmas in the Selfless place, chos rnams zad sar skyel ba'i brda*

2. *Gaining Certainty (la zla)*:

1. *Gaining Certainty By Means of the Three Dharmas of the View, lta-ba'i chos gsum gyis la zla*

2. *Gaining Certainty over the Three Essentials of the Meditation, Like the Essence of the Sun and Moon, with no (inherently existing) Object, sgom pa'i gnad gsum gyis dmigs gtad med par la zla ba nyi ma'i snying po lta bu*

3. *Gaining Certainty in the Three Dharmas of the Activities, like a crazy one, having nothing to abandon and nothing to take up, spyod pa'i chos gsum gyis spang blang med par la zla ba mnyon pa lta bu*

4. *Gaining Certainty of the Three Qualities of the Result, Having No Hopes or Fears, Like the Son of a King, 'bras-bu'i yon tan gsum gyis re dogs med par la zla ba rGyal bus rGyal sa non pa lta bu ste la zla yid ches bcus gnyis.*

4. *The Teachings of the Meaning*: *Inner Disputes* and *The Essentials, Khon rgol gnad thems su bstan pa*

1. *The Instructions Which Show the Inseparability of the View and Meditation through*

the Whispered Lineage of the Oral Instructions which Give the Essential Meaning, khong rgol kha 'thor nyams kyi gdams ngag gis the tshom gyi gegs gsal ba sngar stor gyi nor rnyed pa lta bu

2. *Instructions of the Ideas Which Scatter the Inner Disputes, khong rgol kha 'thor nyams kyi gdams ngag gis the tshom gyi gegs*

3. *Gaining Skill in the Activities through the Essential Instructions, gnad kyis spyod pa'i rtsal sbyang wa dpa' bog gyul ngor zhugs pa lta bu*

4. *Explanation of Progress through the Special Mental Instructions, thems yig gis nyams kyi bogs 'don pa zla wa yar ngo lta bu*

5. *Mixing the Mind and Phenomena, for the Ultimate Result, mthar thug nyams kyi dgongs pas chos dang gang yag bsres pa.*

sMon lam Tha yas rGya mtsho gives a slightly different categorization of the *khrigs-can* works of Machig. These are:

1. The outer teachings which are vast and detailed, consisting of the *bka' tshoms* and *nying tshoms*

2. The inner teachings showing the special instructions in chapters, consisting of the *Secret, Extraordinary, and Special Chapters (Lelag)*

3. The teachings for the purpose of showing what others should do, consisting of the *zhal gdams* and *gnad thems*

4. The secret teachings, consisting of the *rda chos* and *la zlar.*[1]

2. The khrigs-med or kha-thor writings.

These texts are said to be the special oral instructions which Machig Labdron gave to her disciples. It has been difficult to come up with a conclusive list of the *khrigs-med* or *kha-thor* writings, as we have found no complete listing of these writings. We may assume however, that they could

[1]smon-lam mtha'-yas rgya-mtsho, *man ngag zab mo bdud kyi gcod yul stan thog-chig-ma,* pp. 291-436 in *gCod tshogs*, pp. 308-309.

be said to include all the writings of Machig not listed among the *khrigs-can* works.

Tashi Ganden (kra bshi dga' ldan) states in his self-initiation and initiation text of Trosma Nagmo that Machig also wrote the following texts, which may, in this way, then, be listed as a *khrigs-med* or *kha-thor* teaching:[1]

1. *About the Secret Ḍākinīs* (*mkha' 'gro gsang skor*)
2. *The Twenty-One Commitments* (*Damtshig nyer gcig*)[2]
3. *Namshä Chenmo* (the *Phung po zan bskyur gzi rnam bshad*, translated in this section).

Among the *khrigs-can* works, Tashi Ganden lists the *Katshom, Yang*

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[1]*Ma gcig khros ma lha lnga'i dkyil 'khor du bdag nyid 'jug ching dbang blang ba'i cho ga byin rlabs bdud rtsi'i dga' ston*, bshad sgrub chos khor gling, n.d. Xeroxed handwritten manuscript in the private collection of Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche.

[2]Dharmasenghe has written a lengthy commentary on this text, entitled *gzhi lam 'bras bu gsum gyi dam tshig gnyer gcig gi khrid rim*, in which Machig's text is quoted (see fol. 21). We have studied the commentary by Dharmasenghe, but have not located a copy of the root text by Machig in another version, therefore cannot say with certainty whether Dharmasenghe has quoted the text in full. Further research should be done to examine this and other issues regarding the texts written by Machig Labdron.

According to the account related in Dharmasenghe's *History*, this text was written especially for Machig's son, Gyalwa Dondrub, who had a very checkered past, and who finally became a very serious disciple of Machig's and a very diligent practitioner. She instructed him to make these 21 Commitments his main practice. See Dharasenghe, pp. 506-507.

tshoms, *Nying tshoms* and *Lelag rgyas*.[1]

According to the *Namshä Chenmo* (p. 143) Machig composed several texts while residing in a cave in southern Tibet for nine months. As these are not listed in any of the lists we have seen explaining the *khrigs-can* teachings, we may also assume them to be among the *khrigs-med* writings. They include:

1. *chos kyi rteng bshad tshar bar*
2. *mdo ngags zung 'jug gi rnam par bshad pa*
3. *gsal byed mtha' gnyis zil gnon*
4. *zla 'od mun sel la btugs nas zla zer ma*
5. *rin po che'i rgya mdung bshad pa rgyas pa*
6. *dam tshig nyi shu rtsa gcig*.

We read that several of Machig Labdrons's text were translated into Indian languages, including, according to one account, the *bka' tshoms*, *yang tshoms*, nying tshoms, *le lag*, gnad thems, *gsang ba brda chos*, *gzhi lam slong*, and *khyad par gyi man ngag*.[2]

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[1]*Ma gcig khros ma lha lnga'i dkyil 'khor du bdag nyid 'jug ching dbang blang ba'i cho ga byin rlabs bdud rtsi'i dga' ston*, p. 6.

[2]rdza sprul, *gcod yul nyon mongs zhi byed kyi bka' gter bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar byin rlabs gter mtsho*, p. 77. Also in the *Namshä Chenmo*, it is said that Machig taught the *bka'tshoms chenmo* and *lelag* (*Chapters*) in Sanskrit to the three fast-footed Ācaryas from India who came to Tibet together with

Dharmasenghe mentions a song attributed to Machig called "*The Twenty-One Ways of Getting Rid of Interferences*" (*gegs sel nyi shu rtsa gcig 'di mgur dbyangs*).[1]

sMon lam Tha yas rGya mtsho states that another text of Machig, called the *zhal gdams bcu bzhi*[2] is based on the *'brul tsho drug pa* by Phadampa Sangye. He further states that Machig Labdron put all the gCod instructions of the masters together in one system, and also put the practices of all the gCod yogas together and all the teachings of the Gurus together.[3]

Phadampa Sangye to listen to teachings Machig was giving. At that time there was a huge gathering of Tibetans as well, from Central, North, Amdo and Kham areas of Tibet. The account states that Machig knew they were coming because they wanted to find out about this gCod that was so popular in Tibet. The Indians were afraid that it was going to become so popular in Tibet that it would overpower the Indian Buddhism withwhat they assumed was a kind of 'barbaric' practice of Tibetan rituals (see also Dharmasenghe *History*, pp. 470-471). In fact, when the pandits came to hear her teach at her nunnery at Zangs ri khang dmar, all their doubts vanished; they became full of faith and asked if they could carry a copy of Machig's writings to India. In this way it is said that the teachings of Machig went to India. *Namshä Chenmo*, p. 46.

[1]Dharmasenghe, *sprospa nyer bzhi*, fols. 78a. and b.

[2]We have located a text, whose authorship is given as Machig Labdron, under a slightly different name, the *zhal gdams bdud rtsi'i phreng ba*, the fourteenth (*bcu bzhi*) of a collection of texts found in *gCod skor. The collected texts concerned with the practice of gCod as revealed by rDo-rje gling pa (1346-1405) from its place of concealment at Lhasa.*, pp. 449-474.

[3]Monlam tha yas rgya mtsho, p. 309.

In the *Namshā Chenmo* we also read of a text entitled *pha-rol-tu phyin pa'i lugs kyi rnam par bshad pa zla wod mun sel* (*The Explanation according to the Tradition of the Prajñāpāramitā: Clearing the Light of the Moon*) said to be written by Machig Labdron.[1]

Based on these texts, other gCod texts were widely written among those of Sakya, Nyingma, Kargud and Geluk schools.[2]

In conclusion, we would point out that the questions relating to the writings of Machig Labdron will remain open until we have located all the writings which she is said to have written. We do not yet know whether the texts are extant. There is hope that the texts have been preserved through the centuries, and only remain to be found, perhaps in private collections of Tibetans coming from Tibet in current times. We anxiously await material for further research into these questions.

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[1]We have not located this text to date.

[2]*The Ruby Garland*, p. 7.

Introduction to the Material Presented in Part Two

1. The Eight ExtraordinaryChapters

The texts known as the *Lelag* or *Chapters* are a series of three groups of texts each having eight chapters. They are *thun mong gi le lag brgyad (The Eight Common Chapters), thun mong ma ying pa'i le lag brgyad (The Eight Extraordinary Chapters)* and *khyad par gyi le lag brgyad (The Special Eight Chapters).*[1] We list the titles of these *Le-lag (Chapters)* here in their entirety, and the complete translation of *The Eight Extraordinary Chapters* follows.

The Eight Common Chapters

Thun mong gi le lag rgyad

Chapter 1 -- *ma bcos bzhag pa'i le lag*[2]

Chapter 2 -- *gnyen pos bcos su med pa'i le lag*

Chapter 3 -- *brtsol ba dang bcas pa'i le lag*

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[1]We have located these texts in the collection *gdams ngag mdzod*, which, in addition to these texts, includes the *bka' tshoms chenmo*, the *yang tshoms* and the *nying tshoms*. In addition, Dharmasenghe lists these texts along with other texts written by Machig Labdron in his *History*, pp. 547-548. The lists as given by Dharmasenghe are for the most part the same as those texts found in the *gdams ngag mdzod*, with a few variations in the titles of Chapters 1, 2, 6 and 8 of *The Common Eight Chapters*, Chapters 3 and 8 of *The Extraordinary Eight Chapters* and Chapter 3 of *The Special Eight Chapters*.

[2]Chapters 1, 2, 6 and 8 are listed under slightly differed titles in the *gdams ngag mdzod*.

Chapter 4 -- *dngos grub 'byung ba'i*

Chapter 5 -- *tshe gcid sangs rgyas su ngo sprod pa'i le lag*

Chapter 6 -- *gol sa gCod pa'i le lag*

Chapter 7 -- *thugs kyi snying po'i le lag*

Chapter 8 -- *lag len gyi le lag*

The Eight ExtraordinaryChapters

Thung mong ma yin pa'i le lag rgyad

Chapter 1 -- *mtshan gyi don bstan pa*

Chapter 2 -- *nyams len gyi gnad bstan pa*

Chapter 3 -- *dbang po dang sbyar ba'i nyams len*

Chapter 4 -- *gegs sel ba*

Chapter 5 -- *gol sa bstan pa*

Chapter 6 -- *gyeng sdud pa*

Chapter 7 -- *na tsha byung na ji ltar nyams su blang ba*

Chapter 8 -- *bog 'don pa'i man ngag*

The Eight Special Chapters

khyad par gyi le lag bgyad

Chapter 1 -- *skyabs 'gro sems bkyed*

Chapter 2 -- *byin rlabs lus sems phral*

Chapter 3 -- *sgom med byar med*

Chapter 4 -- *nyams len phung po zan bskyur*

Chapter 5 -- *lta ba bdud kyi gcod yul*

Chapter 6 -- *gnas skabs bar chad zhi ba*

Chapter 7 -- *zab don gyi dam tshig*

Chapter 8 -- *nyams su blangs pa'i 'bras bu*

2. *Phung po zan bskyur kyi rnam bshad gCod kyi don gsal --*

Namshä Chenmo -- (rnam bshad chen mo)

The *Namshä Chenmo* is a compilation of ten chapters, the first two of which contain the hagiography of Machig Labdron. In the copies of the texts which we have examined, we find that the first two chapters were edited by

Namkha Gyaltsen (nam mkha' rGyal mtshan).[1] He is said to have been a member of the old Kadampa school.[2]

The remaining eight chapters are the explanations which Machig Labdron gave to questions posed by her disciples. In the colophon of the text we have examined, the editor is given as Champa Sonam (byams-pa bsod-nams), a Gelukpa Lama of the nineteenth century.[3]

Here we present the chapter summaries in brief of these eight chapters:

Chapters One and Two: The Life of Machig Labdron

These two chapters contain the hagiography of Machig Labdron.[4]

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[1]See *Namshä Chenmo*, pp. 79-85. Nam-mkha' rGyal-mtshan states that he added some changes in these pages of the text, written in small letters.

[2]See his biography in Dharmasenghe, *History*, 540-541.

[3]*Phung-po gzan bskyur kyi rnam bshad gcod kyi don gsal*, in *gCod kyi chos skor*, New Delhi, Tibet House, 1974.

[4]These two chapters are, for the most part, found in English translation in Tsultrim Allione, *Women of Wisdom*, London and New York, Arkana, pp. 150-187.

Chapter Three: The Questions of Son Thodnyon

In this chapter, Machig reveals her identity and presents miraculous visions for her son's benefit. She gives a discourse about her special meditation system and tells how it can be distinguished from other systems.

Chapter Four: The Questions of Gangpa

Disciple Gangpa Muksang asks Machig about the demons which are to be eliminated through the practice of gCod. Machig gives an explanation of the demons, and tells how they are cut off.[1]

[1]This chapter has been translated into English by Anila Rinchen Palmo, *Cutting Through Ego-Clinging,* Montignac, Dzambhala, 1988, pp. 52-70.

Chapter Five: Throwing out the Body as Food[1]

(translated in this work)

It is from this chapter that the collection of ten chapters takes its name.

A goddess appears to Machig's son Thodnyon in a vision and tells him that he should learn about Machig's system of gCod. Machig explains to her son and to her five female disciples in detail the way to practice the gCod.

Chapter Six: The Questions of Daughter Gyannema

Questions about the winds, channels and drops of the body. Machig describes the physiology of the inner winds and yogic techniques for purifying these winds.[2]

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[1]This title is reminiscent of Śāntideva's statement in the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, that one should learn to regard the body as old food. Transl. by Stephen Batchelor, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, Dharmasala, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1979, p. 26.

[2]transl. by Carol Savvas and Lodro Tulku, unpublished manuscript, 1988.

Chapter Seven: The Questions of Dharmasenghe

Machig explains how to practice extensively in retreat. Two wandering mendicatns come to see Machig dressed in animal skins. She explains the negative consequences of wearing such skins and explains their faults. She also explains about the common and extraordinary signs of spiritual attainment, and how even signs of spiritual attainment can become demons if one becomes proud and arrogant about them. She explains that one needs to give up self-cherishing and self-grasping, and to cultivate the correct view of emptiness.

Chapter Eight: The Questions of Venerable Zilnon[1]

Machig explains the significance of dreams and visions in terms of one's spiritual progress. Explanations of outer, inner and secret signs measurements of attainments and occurences which arise.

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[1]Dharmenghe indicates that Jetsun Zilnon was also known as Thodnyon Samgrub. See *History, p. 560.*

Chapter Nine: The Questions of Daughter Sonam Gyan

Machig explains about the signs of the time period of the five great degenerations, the changes that will take place both with respect to spirituality and world law and order, and cultural changes in the way that people's minds will degenerate.

Chapter Ten: The Further Questions of Daughter Sonam Gyan

Machig speaks of the future of the gCod practice; gives prophesies of the future teachers who will clear up the misconceptions about gCod (the *gCod-log*, or wrong practices of gCod) which would be propagated about fifty years after Machig had given her teachings of gCod.[1]

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[1]See Dharmasenghe, *History,* 550ff., for an account ascribed to Machig Labdron herself, of how this *gCod-log* would be propagated.

thun mong ma yin pa'i le lag rgyad

The Eight ExtraordinaryChapters

by Machig Labdron (*Ma gcig lab sgron)*

Here are the Eight Extraordinary Chapters.

I prostrate to the excellent destroyer of the demons' power.

Here are the Venerable Mother's instructions known as the Eight Extraordinary Chapters.

Ch. 1 -- Meaning of the Word

Ch. 2 -- Pith Instructions

Ch. 3 -- On Using One's Body According to its Capacity

Ch. 4 -- The Teachings of Clearing Away the Interferences

Ch. 5 -- Teachings about the Mistakes

Ch. 6 -- Collecting Together All that has Scattered

Ch. 7 -- How to Practice if One Gets an illness

Ch. 8 -- How to Bring about More Progress.

Extraordinary Chapter One

The Chapter on the Meaning of the Word.

As for the word "cut" (gCod), what is to be cut?

One should cut one's attachment to the body[1].

One should cut the root of one's mind.[2]

One should cut all directions with respect to the base[3]. One should cut the taking up and casting away on the path. One should cut all hopes and fears about the fruit.

If one cuts all conceptuality at all times right from where it comes up, this is called "gCod".

Extraordinary Chapter Two

The Chap.er of the Pith Instructions.

This has four parts:

1. The instructions which are like using moxabustion as an antidote on

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[1]This is also referred to as the self-cherishing.

[2]This is also referred to as the self-grasping.

[3]Since everything is empty of inherent existence, this is the base of all things, therefore one should not have any sense of discrimination.

the pain.

2. The pith instructions like the sun (which overwhelms all the other light) -- one's practice overwhelms all the power of the gods and demons like the sun overwhelms all the other planets.

3. The pith instructions of seeing everyone as one's parents, i.e. abandoning feelings of closeness and distance towards gods and demons.

4. The pith instructions of cornering a deer, for the situation in which one engages in various methods but nevertheless obstacles still arise.

First, regarding the pith instruction of applying the antidotes on the right spot.

For example, if one gets an illness like pox, boils, etc. on a certain part of the body, then if one applies a moxabustion right on that spot, that illness ceases in its own place.

In order to bring about spiritual progress, the yogi should be in a scary and powerful[1] retreat place. As for what constitutes a scary place, usually a

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[1]The Tibetan word *gnyan sa* refers here not merely to a haunted place in the traditional understanding of the word, meaning inhabited by spirits and ghosts, etc., rather, it is a power place, a place which, by virtue of its extreme power is also rather frightening or awe-inspiring. Typically it is said in the Tibetan tradition that if one has the ability to subdue this scary power place, one

Nāga place is scary. Whatever place is most frightening, one should go there, and there the yogi should place his own mind in the sphere of Emptiness or should do this: wherever the scary place, one should go, sit there and think that in general, spirits are powerful, but the three Jewels are even more powerful. And the root Guru is even more powerful[1] and swifter than the Buddhas of the three times, since all the Buddhas of all the aeons came about because of relying on the Guru. The essence of the Three Jewels is one's root Guru. In his body all the Buddhas are collected. He is in essence Buddha Vajradhāra. He is the root of all the three Jewels, as it says.

One should know that the Guru is even more powerful and swifter than the Buddhas of 100,000 aeons. Therefore, all the Buddhas of the aeons are said (in the Tantras) to come about in reliance on the Guru.

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becomes stronger, in fact one gains power. It is the concept that, through dealing with an anomalous situation, one gains power from it. This *gnyan sa* has the special quality that, if one does well at that place, one develops very good qualities, and if one does badly at that place, one gets very negative results. (Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, 1989).

[1]The word *gnyan* when used here referring to the Guru, refers to the great importance placed on how one relates to the Guru because, just as one has the opportunity to make great spiritual gains based on strong reliance and correct faith in the Guru, so too one has the possibility to get very bad results, i.e. to be reborn in a hell realm, if one loses the previous faith in the Guru. Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, Switzerland, 1989.

On the crown of one's head on a lotus and moon cushion is one's root Guru,[1] into whom all the lineage Gurus are dissolved. In this Guru is the essence of all the Gurus in the form of a Mahāsiddha.

In his right hand a damaru, in the left (crook of the arm) a khatvanga, naked, adorned with the 6 bone ornaments.[2] If he wanted to press down appearance and existence completely, he could. If he wanted to lift them up, he could. He clears away all interferences. He has the ability to confer all attainments.[3] He is endowed with magnificence.

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[1]Here, Machig gives two possibilities here for how to meditate at the scary place, power place, or *gnyan sa*. The first is to actually go to a worldly scary place, i.e. power place, such as a place which is thought to be the palace of the nagas, which from the worldly point of view is the strongest place. Second, as shown in the following meditation, is to go to the Guru, who, from the point of view of the Buddhist Tantras, is even more powerful and is the strongest, in terms of Dharma. This is why, in commentaries regarding the place of practice, it is not at all essential for the practitioner to go to an actual outside scary place such as a cemetery. The advanced gCod practitioner can do the practice at any place at all. This is due to her/his superior ability to see the Guru as the strongest, most powerful (Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, 1990).

[2]Although the text does not mention it, according to the Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, he is probably holding a skullcup (kapala) in the left hand).

[3]This refers to the eight common attainments and the uncommon attainment (i.e. complete enlightenment). The eight common attainments include attainments of precious pills, eye lotion, ability to see treasures under the oceans, magic sword, ability to fly, ability to make oneself invisible, immortality, and the ability to destroy sickness.

Meditate in this way.

Then, concentrating without distraction on the Guru, recite:

"Please Oh Precious Guru, for the sake of all beings, bless me. Please grant me the special experiences and realizations in my continuum. Pacify all my negativities, obscurations and obstacles."

Then, leave the mind in the all pervasive space (Emptiness).

Remain in that way.

Second, the sun-like pith instructions, overpowering the gods and demons.

For example, at dawn, all the great stars in the sky appear smaller. Overpowered by the sunshine and rays of the sun, they finally do not appear any longer.

In the same way, for the yogi, by establishing the mind in the all pervasive, great sphere, all the appearances of interferers as well as the gods and demons of existence are overpowered by the brilliance of the Dharmadhātu and lose their power to appear.

Third, the pith instructions of not holding gods and demons close or distant, but seeing them as one's parents.

For example, just as one's own parents both want to be happy and do not want suffering, likewise for the gods and demons. So do not hold any of them as either close or distant.[1]

If there are no particularly good gods to make offerings to, and if there are no particularly bad demons to beat, if at a particular time, in all of Samsāra and beyond, there is nothing to be abandoned or attained, then one is freed by oneself. Through this realization, therefore, one is not helped by the gods, nor harmed by the demons, rather both are equal in terms of the mind's emptiness.

Also, from the Sūtras, "All phenomena are equal. Likewise the Prajñāpāramitā is equal."

Fourth. Even by acting in these ways, should obstacles still arise such that they cause harm to one and then depart, then the pith instructions of

[1]This is a referring to how one should not set apart gods as good and demons or enemies as bad, because in view of Emptiness, they are all the same, in that they all have no inherent existence, and at the same time on the conventional level, they are all the same in that they all want to have happiness and avoid suffering. So this instruction should be understood as an exhortation to see everyone in terms of their Emptiness.

cornering a deer[1].

For example, a hunter who tries to catch an animal on a field will be unable to, because it can run away, but if he can lead that animal to an edge like rocks or a cliff, etc., that animal has no place to go, and can easily be caught. In a scary place, the yogi, just because of small harms or illness, should not try to escape from those (harms) or do something to avoid them. This will not help. Rather, by remaining in that same place, one should proceed in various activities[2] such as digging scary earth where the demon dwells, stirring scary waters, cutting down scary trees, burning substances which are

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[1]According to the Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche (personal communication, 1990), in such cases where one is bothered incessantly by various obstacles which cause harm but then disappear, one needs to apply methods to incite those obstacles not to go away, but instead to stay right at that very place where the yogi is meditating. For these obstacles and interferers are needed in order for the desired indications and occurences (*slong* or *hlongs*) to come about. If these interferers will not stay by using peaceful means, then one needs to become more rough with them. One needs to cause that interferer (for example a demon) to think, "Oh, this yogi is getting rough with me because I am trying to leave. It would be better if I stay right here, otherwise he is likely to hurt me." In that way, the interfering demon is incited to stay and by staying, the yogi is able to tame that demon to such an extent that it is calm and relaxed and able to receive the benefits from the ensuing gCod ritual.

[2]These are activities which the interfering demon generally finds unpleasant and is therefore forewarned that the gCod practitioner is capable of doing rather rough things to the demon. This causes the interferer to develop a kind of awe for the practitioner.

unpleasant to the demons, and remain on that spot. After that, those demons will never be able to do any more harm. This should be known as the last resort[1].

Extraordinary Chapter Three

The chapter which teaches the practice in accordance with the capacity of the faculties.

A person with the highest capacity should put the body as a corpse, the voice like a dumb mute, the mind like the crystal rounded pebbles in brooks.[2] Then, occurences will be pacified in their own places and the mind will become very blissful. One will feel comfortable. One will have pleasant feelings and special realizations will be achieved.

The person with middle abilities should think that those magical manifestations (*cho 'phrul*) which arise in the scary place are the appearances

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[1]This method is to be performed only if the yogi is having a lot of trouble with those interfering demons, explains the Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche (personal communication, 1990).

[2]The mind should be placed in the unthinkable, unspeakable sphere of Emptiness.

of one's own mind[1]. Since the mind's essence is the birthless Emptiness, knowing that these magical manifestations are the adornments and play of the mind's conceptions, then whatever appearances arise, they occur as magical manifestions of the mind. So they appear as mental occurences. Therefore they are the mind's occurences,[2]

Also, when (these magical manifestations are) pacified, the mind is pacified. They have no meaning separate from the mind. Since the mind is birthless, relax it in that sphere.

As for those with the very least faculties, by separating the mind and body, and discarding the body completely, then only the naked consciousness is there. The mind is baseless, it has no support. By practicing in this way, the magical manifestions are pacified; the consciousness has a blissful, pleasant

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[1]The great yogi Milarepa also points out, when confronted with these *cho 'phrul*, "You demons and all the manifestations in the cosmos are merely conjurations of one's own mind; this is explicitly taught in all the holy Sūtras and Tantras." These manifestions occur because one has inner conceptualizations. He says that when one recognizes that these magical manifestations arise because of the mind's own conceptuality, then, rather than hurting one, they actually help the yogi to develop realizations.
The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa, trans. by Garma C.C. Chang, Boulder, Shambhala, 1977, p. 301.

[2]They are the mind's occurences since the mind has labelled them as 'magical manifestations'.

feeling, followed by the increase of realizations.

So, thus, the practices for those with excellent, middling and least faculties should be carried out, and even if one receives support from nonhumans, and so forth, they will not bring delight to one's mind, and therefore the demon of joy will not tire you.

Then, whether you stay in solitude or take care of groups, or stay in a town or mix with communities, whatever you do and in whatever situation you find yourself, you should never create causes for the (internal) demons to enter, such as trying to give a good (and false) impression about oneself or trying to profit from a situation. One should also not be separated from Emptiness, compassion, and respect and admiration for the Guru.

If you stay too long in a village, your signs of realization may degenerate, so do not stay long in villages. Do not go out for too long in the practice of *ro-snyom*[1] begging. Do not wander about for the sake of food nor

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[1]Machig often refers to the *ro-snyom* or 'Same taste' practices. Here, she is most likely referring to the practices which the ro-snyom yogi would engage in, such as wandering from place to place not worrying about whether he eats pure or defiled food, not worrying whether he is in the company of high or low, whether he is healthy or ill, whether he has sufficient clothing or not. As everything is, in terms of Emptiness, of the same taste (ro-snyom), the followers of that tradition engage in unconventional behavior. Machig's caution here is, according to the Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche (personal communication, 1989), that if one goes out for too long in this way, one is apt

take care of groups for too long. Do not engage in talks in which one is not clear about what one is talking, such as gossiping, or distracted talk or talking while walking.

One should always be in quiet solitude, and when staying in that solitude, where one can retain those realizations, one should never generate attachment for food that is given to you by others. Even if one receives such offerings, they should be used to make offerings for the Guru or Gaṇacakra[1] offerings. Since actually these (offerings) are all manifested by non-human spirits[2].

One should also never generate attachment or anger towards the various

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to forget about the need to stay mainly in an isolated place, for the city and retreat place would also be equal (*ro-snyom*) in terms of their Emptiness. Nevertheless, the beginning gCod practitioner should take care, Machig states, not to dwell too long in groups or cities.

[1]The Ganacakra offerings (Tibetan, *tshogs)* are an essential part of Tantric practices, wherein one makes offerings of substances to the Guru, Three Jewels, Ḍākas and Ḍākinīs, Dharma protectors and six realms of beings. See the text by Zong Rinpoche, translated in part 3 of this work, *The Way to Offer the Gaṇacakra in Connection with the Profound Practice of gCod.*

[2]The non-human spirits may arrange for offerings to be given to the gCod practitioner in order to test his reaction to receiving those offerings. Thus, according to Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche (personal communication, 1990), they should not be seen as something indicating one's spiritual progress, but should be reacted to in a neutral manner, without developing attachment for or pride with respect to these offerings.

gentle animals (*ridags*)[1], since these are all created by non-human spirits.

When you first go to a solitary place, if at first you find it pleasant and to your liking, and then, the longer you have been there you begin to feel uncomfortable, you will have obstacles and should move to another place.

If, from the beginning, you become sad and fearful, but you stay and begin to feel comfortable, it is a sign that your virtuous activities will increase.

Likewise in a solitary place, if there are nonhuman occurences, just meditate on love and compassion and they will be pacified. If they are not pacified, by transforming your body into food, they will be pacified.

These occurences should be pacified by peaceful methods and not wrathful. One should try to bring oneself and others on the path of liberation with compassion, loving kindness and Bodhicitta.

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[1]These animals may come to the place where the gCodpa is practicing, and should be understood as having been manifested by the non-human interfering spirits, in order to attempt to interfere with one's practice.

Extraordinary Chapter Four

The Teaching of Clearing Away the Interferences.

If one becomes proud about having gotten rid of certain infectious diseases such as *hlogpa*[1], leprosy, stroke caused by uncleanliness, or other degenerate diseases, or if one loses one's previous realizations, or becomes mentally obscured (sinking or dullness) as a result of having been in contact with things that are unclean, or if one gets bodily swelling and contagious illnesses, these are *obstacles to the practice* and in such cases, one should use the antidotes that have been explained earlier (first and foremost, meditate on Emptiness), and for whatever happens, mix that happening right with your practice, that is, do not let those interferences interupt your practice. Take the interferences and mix them right with the practice (mix them with Emptiness), and the interferences will cease quickly.

If illness due to uncleanliness occurs (*grib*), instead of bathing, go especially to persons who are unclean, such as corpses, lepers, etc., and meet them directly, exchange clothes with them, and step right on it (instead of

[1]According to Chandra Das, *hlog* is a disease, such as a large ulcer or sore, cancer or tumor. *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*, p. 1338.

avoiding that unclean situation)[1].

And as for setting off in an inauspicious direction, or on an inauspicious date or junction of planets, one should not avoid doing such things, but should instead step right on (those things which one would normally avoid).

With respect to Emptiness, it is birthless and deathless from the very beginning, thus it is free from actions and efforts that come out of wrong conceptions. Thinking in this way, mix the mind with the sphere of Emptiness. If you do not mix the consciousness (mind) and the sphere of Emptiness, but try anyway to do this practice of stepping right into a dangerous situation (thinking, oh it's not important to mix the mind with Emptiness) then *interferences to generating the correct view* will arise.

So, first, one should do the practices of proper conduct such as the seven-limbed puja, etc. And then, again and again, mix the mind with the sphere (of Emptiness). If there is a circumstance which is most disagreeable, like an illness or disharmony or anything unpleasant, one should do the practice right there, right *on* those very circumstances.

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[1]This is because illnesses caused by uncleanlineness come about because of one's own misconceptions. Usually, if one is particularly susceptible to *grib*, he should avoid being around a dead body or a leper, but Machig says, go right to them, wear their clothes., etc.

And too, with respect to the gCod practice, it is done in order to subdue demons.[1] As for those demons which are quite easy to subdue, when they *are* subdued, you should stop using those exercises of subduing. Do not overuse them, but then just leave things as they are. Because if you overdue this meditation, it becomes an *interference for the activity or practice*.[2] But for those demons that are difficult to cut off, one should apply the antidotes again and again in order to gain more progress.

Moreover, having had an introduction to Emptiness by the Guru, if one is able to identify just once this experience of Emptiness, by mixing the mind with emptiness, and then thereby thinks, "I am Buddha, I have the Dharmakāya Buddha within me", this will produce an *interference for the result*.

Just by having an introduction to the Dharmakāya one time by the Guru, does not make one a Buddha. If you do then think, I am (this very thing which is to be attained) a Buddha, this becomes an interference. If you do not meditate on this (emptiness) again and again, you will not be able to be

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[1]Machig refers here to outer demons, but they should be understood as being representative of one's own inner demons. Machig teaches that there are no greater demons than one's own inner demons of self-grasping and self-cherishing.

[2]As in *Śamatha* meditation, one is here instructed not to overuse the antidotes.

enlightened. One has to meditate again and again on the Dharmakāya, without having any wrong conceptions. Much wisdom is needed. Analytical and placement meditation are needed.

So, out of the sphere of Emptiness, with a mind free of all hopes and fears, one should make prayers for the great Mahāyāna which are the very favorable circumstances to bring about the spontaneous, fulfilling, most excellent activities of the Buddha.

Extraordinary Chapter Five

The Chapter Teaching About the Mistakes.

1. The practice of gCod straying to being used as divination medicine.
2. gCod straying to being used for one's own desires
3. gCod straying into wrathful mantras.

First, the practice of gCod straying to being used as divinination medicine.

Having practiced in solitary, scary places, whereby one has gained some clarity of the mind, if one then makes observations (through divination) regarding whether or not to hurt the demons, or whether one would be able to help a sick person or not, and if one speaks about these things to others, so that a number of people keep coming to one asking for help, then this is known as having strayed to using the gCod as divination practice.

2. As for straying to using the practice of gCod for gaining desired objects (such as form, sound taste, etc.), this may include pleasurable distractions, a lot of material gains, whereby one does not move from one scary place to another, but instead is distracted by material possessions and servants and those followers who are drawn to one's fame, wealth and reputation. One is distracted by these, whereby one loses one's experiences and strays to enjoying those sensual objects in an ordinary way. This is known as gCod straying to the field of the five sensual objects.

3. As for the gCod straying into the practice of wrathful mantras, if one, having kept up one's practice and experiences through the power of Truth and Emptiness, then begins going to those who are suffering from illness or interfering spirits and endeavours to heal and bless them, and then begins to be constantly invited by everyone, from one town to the next, (whereby one

becomes quite well known for one's healing powers), then, one's realizations start to degenerate and one loses the blessings that one had previously. Thus, one is left with no alternative but to start using wrathful mantras to subdue demons. This is known as gCod straying to wrathful mantras[1].

Extraordinary Chapter Six

Collecting what has been Scattered.

1. Getting rid of the weaknesses of one's practice.
2. Collecting what has been scattered.
2. Loosening what was too tight.

First, getting rid of the weaknesses of one's practice.

If, having gone to a scary retreat place and staying there for some time, no occurences, indications or magical manifestations or signs of the warmth of realization (Bodhicitta) take place, it is because one's practice is too weak, so the interfering spirits do not come. Since one's power is too weak, they do not

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[1]Here the danger is that one's whole life may be spent this way, like becoming a doctor, going from one patient to the next, and being perhaps compelled to use these wrathful means to heal others.

come. So, in order to make those interferences arise, one must use concentration (calm abiding and insight meditation). If even that does not help, one should go naked except for wearing a human skin, and should blow a human thighbone trumpet and play a damaru, calling out the names of all the gods and demons dwelling in India, China or Nepal, and say, "I am doing the gCod practice, so all of you come here."

First offer a white torma, then a red, then separate one's mind and body and say, "Take my body's flesh, drink my blood." This fulfills the collection of merit.

And then, establishing the mind in the supportless meditation like the sky is the collection of wisdom.

Even if various occurences come up all together at once, one should remain with the understanding of Emptiness and through that one will be able to cut the ropes of pride completely[1] and will bring about realizations and understanding.

Second. As for collecting what has been scattered[2]

The mind should be one-pointed. Do not let the mind be divided. Don't

[1]This refers to definitely ascertaining that there is no self inherent existence.

[2]This is a reference to how to meditate during Śamatha (calm abiding) and Vipaśyanā (insight).

have any divisions in the mind. Don't let the mind be unprecise and unstable -- sometimes loose, sometimes tight, sometimes sinking and sometimes excited.

Third. Loosening what was too tight. The tightness andtension should be slackened. Do not go to the extremes of overexertion in meditation or overexertion in desires. The mind should be free of those extremes and be left in a relaxed way. The mind should not tire itself out, and it should not sink or stray. It should be relaxed, not too tight and not too loose[1].

Extraordinary Chapter Seven

How to practice if illnesses arise.

1. Stopping or cutting off the illness by wandering in retreat and scary places.

2. Balancing the four elements

3. Putting the illness on top of the illness[2]

4. Showing the last resort--what kind of final, purposeful actions should

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[1]Just as a string on a guitar should be not too tight and not too loose, in order to produce a fine sound.

[2]Using the illness, as in homeopathy, where the antidote is of a similar nature to the illness itself.

be done.

1. Cutting by going to the scary retreat places.

If one gets an illness, then, without looking for other methods, one should go to a scary place, cut the attachment for the body, give up oneself completely to those interferers who have caused the illness and say to the interferers, "You and I, we both have had the same prayers (in the past) and therefore we have this present relation. So, I offer you this body of mine. Stay here. Since I have the profound transmission, I will meditate on the profound pure meaning in order to purify all negativities for us both."

Separating the mind and body, place the mind in a relaxed manner on the meaning of the way things are (empty of inherent existence), thereby whatever illnesses there are will cease by themselves.

When the illnesses are healed, think of the body as Mount Meru, and think, "Since we three (the interfering spirits which are causing the illness, the sick person, and the yogi oneself), are making similar prayers for the time being, don't go anywhere else. Stay right here."

In order to cleanse the negativities and obscurations of the three of us, I will meditate on the pure meaning (of Emptiness) and will give the body of the sick person completely to that interfering spirit and remain in the meditation

of the profound meaning.

Wherever the pain is, within the sphere of Emptiness, stroke the painful place and recite the words of Truth. See that one's mind is also empty, the body and mind of the sick one are empty, and Emptiness is empty. Then, without losing the thought that Emptiness is empty, remain there in the meditation of Emptiness. Leave everything in the atmosphere of the profound meaning of Emptiness, bring the consciousness right on the thought of Emptiness (do not let it stray away.)

2. The way to balance if the elements get weak:

In general, whatever illness the yogi may have, through his practice he will not hold strongly to the body, but will leave the body naturally, thus he will be freed from that (illness). If he does that and still does not get better, then, realizing that this body and its illnesses, come about from the four elements then, if the outer flesh and limbs of the body are ill, the yogi should dissolve the outside four elements (earth, water, fire, air) into one's own inner four elements.

Wherever you have pains, visualize that you put that part of the body under you. Then, leave the body like an empty, abandoned house (ownerless)

and just forget about it, as if it were a corpse, and lead the mind out of the body into the space.

If the inner body is sick, the inner body (inner elements and organs, etc.) should go out and dissolve into the outer elements. Let the mind disappear like fog. Let it vanish, disappear, just relax it. By this loosening and relaxing and releasing[1], the disease is pacified.

Or, dissolve the outer four elements into the inner four elements, and the inner four elements into the secret bodhicitta. The mind should be just simply left without moving, in the birthless Emptiness.

3. How to put the illness on top of the illness (as an antidote).

If it is a heat illness (fever), it should be pacified by the treatment of fire.

If it is a cold illness, it should be helped by applying water, and then should be dried out completely by using water.

So, if that person has a heat illness, you should make him take food and behave in such a way to get rid of the fever.

Have the patient think in the following way, "Oh, if I would die, how wonderful. How happy I would be if death would come right now, that would

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[1]This is like letting prisoners free or releasing something one is holding.

be the experience of the absolute Truth."[1] Since there is the possibility to become fully enlightened in the sphere of great wisdom, I will identify that Enlightenment."[2] Without any attachment to this life, say *Phat*, then separate his mind and body; leave the consciousness relaxed, with no hopes nor doubts. Expand the consciousness. The consciousness should be vast, pervasive without being mindful of anything. One should not be mindful of any conventional phenomena (block the conventional appearances). Keep the mind really glued to this Emptiness, by leaving it continuously in this state where there is nothing (no appearance of conventional phenomena), without any breaks; keep the mind in this state without wasting a minute. Keep the mind right there where it landed the first second -- in the sphere of Emptiness. Remaining in that state, one becomes completely free from grasping to the inherent existence of the

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[1] Geshe Kalsang Gyatso explains in *Clear Light of Bliss*, that "According to secret mantra the eighth sign, the clear light of death, is the basic truth body," which Machig refers to in this passage. Here,the clear light of Emptiness is actualized at the time of death. "The meditator who can purify the ordinary clear light of death [and] and the ordinary intermediate state in this way will naturally be able to purify ordinary rebirth as well and transform it into the spiritual path". See *The Clear Light of Bliss*, London, Wisdom, 1982, 91-92.

[2]One should meditate on the meaning of the Prajñāpāramitā, or Emptiness (Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, 1990).

illness, and the cure comes.[1]

Even if one gets cured, one should not have any feeling of rejoicing, but should leave the mind, without direct the consciousness to anything.

And as for an illness of cold, apply food and conduct which would counteract the illness. And again one should not be overjoyed about the healing of the illness. But this also should be placed in the sphere of Emptiness. Leave the consciousness without holding firmly to it, without any grasping. Recite Phat and go to sleep.

Thus, free oneself from the grasping to self-inherent existence. There is nothing to meditate on other than freeing oneself from self-grasping pride. The actual meditation is that one does *not* meditate.[2] So then, even if I die, in that way it is very good. In that case (with Emptiness), death would be a liberation into the Dharma sphere. And also if one does not die, it is also not so important.[3]

Since the wisdom of the mind is ceaseless, by understanding the meaning,

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[1]One has to meditate on the Emptiness of the illness. If one is free of the grasping to inherent existence of the illness, since that is the cause of the illness, then one will be freed from the illness.

[2]See also Machig Labdron, *Yangs tshoms*, in *gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 14, p. 107.

[3]Geshe Kalsang Gyatso, op cit., 91ff.

since there is no such thing as death for the mind, it should be left in a good place, wherever it is. On the other hand, when one is not so happy, or wishes to go, or cry, or has some kind of anger, if something like that should happen, in that case you should *not* leave the mind in its natural state, but should look for the culprit and cut it off completely. Having identified that, then leave the consciousness in its relaxed state.

4. What kind of final purposeful actions one should undertake.

If you are blessing others, you should do this in such a way that it does not make interferences to the development of relative bodhicitta,[1] you should do this.

Meditate on loving kindness and compassion for all those beings who are suffering from illness. Take refuge, generate Bodhicitta, make prayers to the lineage Gurus, speak the prayers of truth in the name of the deities, and ask for blessings in order to pacify illness and interferences.

Regarding the ultimate truth, one should think that oneself, the deities

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[1] This refers to engages in the practices of a Bodhisattva for the purpose of helping others, such as giving, practicing patience, moral discipline, perseverance, etc.. In this case, if one is doing prayers and rituals, etc., one should not do harming *pūjas*, etc.

and the sick person, in the sphere of Emptiness, are the same nature. Mix these with one's mind. Then leave the consciousness relaxed, without fluctuations. Do not fall into the idea that, 'Oh, I helped him. I hope something good comes to me.' And if that person is healed, don't have hopes, don't get proud about that. Just leave one's own qualities, realizations and abilities to bless others as something quite neutral.[1]

Do not think that meditation alone suffices. The mind should not be discouraged nor should it be fastened to only one thought, but it should be vast.[2]

Develop patience in meditating on Emptiness, where there are no other thoughts (other than Emptiness).[3]

If you do this, then this is the truth of the Dharmakāya. This can heal all illnesses just like a light eliminates the darnkess. So, just like getting rid of darkness when a lamp is lit in a room (you can no longer find the darkness), so,

[1]Don't generate a kind of pride and joy about one's accomplishments in this matter, otherwise, the Demon of Joy will appear and interfere.

[2]For example, as the Venerable Geshe Champa Lodrö Rinpoche explained, one should not only be thinking of one's loved one, when meditating on the conventional mind of enlightenment, but rather should think of all living beings.

[3]When meditating on the Ultimate Bodhicitta, Emptiness, one should be free of all concepuality. One's mind should be the essence of space.

these illnesses are completely eliminated right from where they were. In the Ratnagunasamcayagāthā, "The blessings of the Truth pacify the aggregate of fire[1]".

Healing a child.

Take him or her to the scary place and give all of his/her flesh and blood. Bless the mind with Emptiness.

The, if the child is still ill, one needs to meditate very strongly, with very great concentration.

Meditate on the one who is sick, the sickness, the cause of the sickness as all empty of inherent existence. They are all the same in the sphere of the Truth of Emptiness.

Wash the clothes of the child in water, and throw the water in caves, on trees, etc. Burn a little bit of the child's excrement in a fire (let the smoke rise, and put the child on top over the smoke.)

Rub the brains of a leper on the child and feed the child the leftover food of a leper. Have a leper put on the child's woolen clothes, and then dress the

[1]This refers to the fire of conceptuality (*rnam rtog*), i.e. ignorance (Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, 1990).

child again with those very clothes.

If you cannot take the child to the scary place, take stones, wood, etc. from the scary place, and put them on the child. This will also suffice.

If you want to induce rain, one needs to go to a waterfall inhabited by Nāgas. Make a torma to be offered to the Nāgas.[1] If it still does not rain, then one would have to perform wrathful actions, i.e. to obtain the blood and brains of a leper, and the clothes, etc. Burn them in the fire and wave the smoke. Put the ashes in the waterfall and it will rain.

[1]This torma is made with Basuki - a Nāga medicine, and the three white and three sweet substances. (Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, 1990).

Extraordinary Chapter Eight

How to Bring About More Progress.

Although one make a lot of effort, if there still are not results, it is because one has overdone the practice.[1]

There are three ways to make a change (to do things differently) in order to bring about progress.

1. Bring about a change by meditating on compassion for all living beings
2. Bring about a change by meditating on respect and faith in the Guru
3. Bring about a change by getting right on top of any adverse circumstances which may arise, rather than letting them get you down.

First (regarding bringing about a change by meditating on compassion for all living beings):

First make torma offerings to all the Ḍākinīs and protectors. Then, think in this way: In general, how poor are all living beings in the three realms, and especially, how poor are all those enemies and demons who are

[1] Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche points out that if one is doing gCod, and no indications (*hlong*) arise, then one has been exerting a lot of effort in the practice but in a somehow faulty way (personal communication, 1990).

harming me. All those beings have been my mother and father countless times, and they have helped me so much, and saved me from harm. They have given up their own lives for me; they have cherished me as their own child. They have been so very kind.

Think in this manner.

All these parents of mine want happiness, but they do not experience happiness. And on top of that, they have so much unwished for suffering, without any control of their own. Oh, those poor things.

Think like that.

Moreoever, first meditate that they all actually abide in this suffering. Meditate on the fact that they all have created the causes for such suffering in the past and now this is the fruit of their past negative actions. And even now, they are creating the causes for suffering. Meditate on this until tears fall from your eyes and your throat gets all choked up, until your whole body gets this feeling.

Then, thinking of all their suffering, count with one's rosary, at least 108 times, elaborating (mentally) all the various sufferings.[1] In this way, practice

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[1]One should think, 'oh, that poor thing, his arm is hurt; oh that poor thing, he is blind; oh, that poor one, he is starving,' and so forth. (Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, 1990).

this retreat on compassion in four sessions daily.

After that, compassion will be generated automatically. And by the power of that generation, all one's negativities will be purified and one will automatically progress in virtuous activities. Then, based on the power of this meditation, one will be able to generate the understanding of Emptiness in one's mindstream. If one then generates Emptiness, one will not have to meditate (on generating compassion); it will come of its own accord.

Second. Bringing about progress by meditating on faith and respect for the Guru.

If one makes great effort on the path and still does not progress, it is because the blessings of the Guru have not entered one. If it happens that one does not get the blessings, it is because that even if one makes requests, one has done so without great respect and faith.[1] So that is why, even if one exerts a lot of effort and stress, if one does not really have faith and respect, there will be no results. If that happens, then put aside all other Dharma practices completely and day and night in four sessions, gain the conviction that one's

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[1]Faith is generated by remembering the kindness of the Guru and respect by recollecting his great qualities. (Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, public discourse, Switzerland, 1989).

kind root Guru who so greatly benefits oneself with teachings and blessings is the very Buddha and make earnest requests over and over to the Guru while doing Guru Yoga.

When one actually sees the Guru as having only good qualities and no faults, then one will have faith and respect and will receive blessings. Then, one's experiences and realizations will continue to increase and increase.

(The way to do this:)

Sit on one's seat, in a relaxed comfortable way. Meditate very stably on love and compassion. Then, on the crown of one's ordinary body, on a lotus, moon and sun cushion, visualize one's root Guru, the root Guru being whoever it is that benefits one so greatly with teachings and blessings, sitting in his natural aspect as one normally sees him. Generate a mind that is full of faith and respect.

Then, countless light emanates from the heart of the Guru to the ten directions and three times, inviting all the root and lineage Gurus and all the mandalas of deities, the Ḍākinīs, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, in the aspect of light, who dissolve into the Guru, becoming one.

Think that the brilliance and light of the Guru endow one with even more brightness and brilliance. Think that all the protectors cover all the land and

surround you, eliminating all obstacles. Then, with great respect and faith, make mental homage to the Guru. Gain a definite feeling of faith and respect in the Guru. Offer completely all of one's body and enjoyments and make requests, saying:

"Oh precious Guru, for the sake of all living beings, please bless me. Please grant me the special experiences and realizations. Please pacify all my negativities, obscurations and sufferings." Say this again and again.

If one has really generated this longing mind deeply, even if one does not say even one word, it is the same.

Then, from the heart of one's Guru, blessings come like the sky. Since the heart of the Guru is the Dharmakāya, which is like the sky, then the blessings are endless (like the sky).

One should have no doubt that those blessings from the Guru's mind, as endless as the sky, definitely enter one's own mind, which is also as endless as the sky. Having no doubt about that make requests from the depths of one's bones. Doing this, it is impossible that one would not receive the blessings.

So in this way, make requests in four sessions, day and night. At the end of every session, the Guru becomes light and dissolves into one's crown, mixing inseparably with one's mind. Think this way and let the consciousness

rest in the all pervasive Emptiness.

Then afterwards, during the four break sessions, also one should remember the faith and respect that one has for the Guru. And one should meditate on this again and again. If one has this respect and faith, then one will definitely receive the blessings and realizations will arise.

(What to do when) there are wrathful, bad circumstances: Generally, just knowing how to meditate somewhat and having a bit of intelligence does not suffice. One needs to be certain as to what is to be abandoned and a clear understanding of Emptiness (the Mādhyamika view). If one does not have this view, one should study again and again and mix one's mind with this Mādhyamika View, so that it comes about spontaneously and so that one's mind has a power to it. One must enter the Mādhyamika view with one's complete mind.

Without this training in the Mādhyamika view, then if one meets with wrathful negative circumstances, (i.e.the views of the outsiders), then one immediately changes.

For example, if you are with a helper and an enemy comes, you will abandon that helper and run away when you see the enemy. So if you do not mix your mind completely with a good helper, so much so that you are

inseparable (with the View), then when you meet the enemy, it's as if your helper runs away (the Correct View leaves one).[1]

If you meet very adverse circumstances, you need something that can go right on top of these and step on them and that will not be hurt by these adverse circumstances. It is not enough that one has faith in Dharma and has refuge. One also needs to have the view of selflessness. Otherwise all the qualities of

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[1]In the *Prajñāpāramita-Ratnaguṇasaṃcayayagāthā* (*sdo-sdus pa*) we find similar references to the importance of having Method and Wisdom as one's constant companions. For example, in 'The Simile of the Ship [286-287], we read:

"When a ship breaks up in the ocean,
Those who do not get hold of a corpse, a stick or a log,
Go to their destruction in the midst of the water, without having gained the shore;
But those who hold on to something, travel to the other shore and reach it:
Just so those who, although endowed with some faith and in possession of some serenity,
Reject the perfection of wisdom, the mother:
In the ocean of birth-and-death they must wander about for ever and ever,
In birth, decay, death, sorrow, turmoil, and the breaking up [of limbs].
but those who have been taken hold of by the supreme wisdom, skilled in seeing the own-being of existence, seers of ultimate reality,
they are persons worthy of the vehicle who have collected
the wealth of merit and cognition.
They will speedily experience the exceedingly wonderful Sugata-enlightenment." trans. by Edward Conze, in *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and Its Verse Summary*, San Francisco, Four Seasons Foundation, 1973, p. 34.

liberation cannot arise in the mind. One needs something which can step on top of the bad circumstances, that is, one should train in Mādhyamika very strongly. Then, while training in Mādhyamika, if one thinks they can give up the practices of morality, and other related practices connected to the collection of merit, that is an abondonment of morality, i.e. a downfall. And thereby one is sunk in this downfall. So whatever appears, one should cut[1] it off directly, giving up anything which is an obstacle to the practice of the Six Perfections, and should practice[2] in the activities which are meritorious, (i.e. the Six Perfections).[3] One should think like this: Until now I have not reached

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[1]*gCod*, pronounced *chö.*

[2]*spyod*, also pronounced *chö.*

[3]We again see the parallels to the *Prajñāpāramita-Ratnagunasamcayagāthā*, in '*Wisdom and Skill in Means*', [309-11], Conze, op cit., p. 38.

"If a Bodhisattva wishes to reach this
Enlightenment of the Sugatas, free from differentiated dharmas,
He should practise the perfection of wisdom, joined to skill in means.
Without wisdom there is not the attainment of the leaders of men.
A bird with a frame one hundred and fifty miles large
Would have little strength if its wings were lost or feeble:
If it should jump down to Jambudvipa from the abodes of the Gods of the Thirty-Three,
It would travel to its destruction.
Even if he would procure these five perfections of the Jinas for many niyutas of kotis of aeons,
And would all the time tend the world with an infinite abundance of vows; -- If he is without skill in means, deficient in wisdom, he falls into Discipleship."

Enlightenment because I have grasped to appearances as truly existent. I have engaged in some practices of virtue and have abandoned some non virtue, but I have not seen then as the same taste (*ro-snyom* -- i.e., equal taste in terms of their Emptiness).

As for the actual situation of the mind, there is no birth, no death, nothing clean or dirty, no enemies nor friends. They all have no true existence, but I have seen them as truly existent, so I have not been able to give up (separate the mind and body, *bem rig bral*) and have not been able to mix the consciousness with space (*dbying rig sres*). So now, you should understand this, and should go, go.

This grasping at true existence is my enemy. Throw away this dualistic perception (of self-grasping of persons and phenomena).

Say *Phat Phat*, to whatever fear or fright, suffering or doubts, attachment or delusions, arises. Mix them with the sphere of Emptiness. Do this until the mind is free from grasping (*snyems*). Endeavor in this again and again.

Moreover, at first, you need to have a very sharp mind. With that very sharp mind, meditate on the Emptiness of hatred towards enemies, of love towards one's children, of delicious and unsavory food and drink, of lepers and sick one, of the stench of corpses, of revulsive things, of all things which bring

fear and negative feelings to the mind. Towards all of this, one should be without any conceptuality.

Get rid of all one's conceptualizations about these and get right on top of them. Do not try to avoid them, but rather obstruct the mind of attachment and hatred. See one's faults and get out of that nest of faults.

Without having any conceptuality, mix the mind with Emptiness and leave it relaxed.

Then, one should go about crying and laughing or screaming; do the kinds of actions which (help to) turn the mind away from the eight worldly Dharmas[1].

(In this way,) one gets out of the mainstream of the people[2].

If you do remain continually with the mind completely focussed and without distractions, then the mistaken (grasping) mind will be destroyed and one will get rid of attachment for Samsāra (and will gain Renunciation). One

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[1]These are: wanting to have gain and avoid loss, wanting to have pleasure and to avoid pain, wanting to have praise and to avoid being criticized, wanting to have good reputation and to avoid disrepute.

[2]This is important in the gCod practice, according to the Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, because if one does not get out of the mainstream of people or society, one comes under the influence of the eight worldly Dharmas. (personal communication, 1990).

will generate strong faith and respect and will be freed of the signs (of self grasping).

Then, if one asks, will one attain the resultant three (Buddha) bodies? The wisdom which directly perceives all phenomena as empty of inherent existence is designated as the Dharmakāya (Truth body, *chos-sku*).

(Coming) out of that sphere of (wisdom perceiving Emptiness) through the power of prayer, for the purpose of all others, that is called the Nirmānakāya (Emanation Body, *sprul-sku*).

Enacting the purpose of others without any conceptualiy, as these are both enjoyed inseparably, this is called the Samghogakāya (Complete Enjoyment Body, *longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku*).[1]

Perceiving these three bodies as of inseparable essence, unthinkable, unsurpassable, as the same taste, that is the Svabhāvakāya (Natural Truth Body, *ngo bo nyid kyi sku*).

Here ends the Eight Extraordinary Chapters.

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[1]In the Sambhogakāya form one can remain in the meditation on Emptiness while doing the purpose of others, and can do the purposes of others while staying in the meditation on Emptiness.

Chapter Five of the

Phung po gzan bskyur kyi rnam bshad gCod kyi don gsal byed

(Namshä Chenmo)

"Transforming the Body into Food"

Son Thönyön, after having meditated for 13 months, dreamt one night of a girl who appeared to him radiating the five colors. She came to him and said, "Yogi, do you know about all of your mother Labdron's Dharma system, or are there some things that you do not know?

Thönyön answered, "There is no teaching of my Mother Machig Labdron that I do not know."

The girl answered, "Yes, Oh yogi, you have a general idea of the teachings of Mother Labdron and especially regarding the Secret Tantra, it is clear that you know about those teachings. But as for how to put those teachings into actual practice, you need to know the teachings of Offering of One's Own Body. For this, go to the Copper-Colored Mountain[1]."

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[1]This is where Machig Labdron established her monastery, (Zangs ri khang dmar or Zangs ri mkhar dmar).

And then the young girl disappeared into light.

Then Thönyön thought, "Was this girl an emanation of my own Mother Machig? And as for the 'Offering of One's Own Body', it *is* something I don't know about, so I must go to ask Mother Machig." And so Thönyon went to the Copper-Colored Mountain (Zangri Khangmar) together with all the other disciples.

There, Machig was giving the initiation of the Five Deity Vajravārāhī. Thönyon saw Machig as the actual Vajravārāhī together with the four dākinīs. Also Machig's Four Daughter Ornaments also saw her as Vajravārāhī together with four brilliant, mirror-like lights in the four directions, waving in the wind and blazing brilliantly with colors of white, yellow, red and green.

The next morning at sunrise, Machig asked Thönyon, "Why did you come here?"

Thönyon said, "I saw a girl of many colors, who told me that I should come to ask you for your teachings of offering one's own body."

Machig said, "Yes, that was a field-born Ḍākinī who has many forms. She came here and said that she told you to come here."

Then, Thönyon and the four Daughters asked Machig about the appearance of Machig as Vajravārāhī that they had seen during the initiation.

Machig replied:

"On the outer level I am the Mother Prajñāpāramitā. On the inner level I am Ārya Tārā and on the secret level I am Vajravārāhī. And as for the entourage of four dakinis, on the outer level they are the four elements, on the inner level the four wisdoms, on the secret level the four letters. Buddha Ḍākinī is the white letter HA, Ratna Ḍākinī the yellow letter RI , Padma Ḍākinī the red letter NI, Karma Ḍākinī the green letter SA. I am the dark blue letter BAM. The main deity and the entourage are the five letters.

Buddha Ḍākinī is earth, Ratna Ḍākinī is water, Padma Ḍākinī is fire, Karma Ḍākinī is air; I am space. So we five are the five elements., Also, as for these the main deity myself and the four in the entourage, these five are on the outer level the five bodies. On the inner level the five wisdom Dākinīs, on the secret level the five great wisdoms.

Buddha Ḍākinī is the Dharmakāya, Ratnaḍākinī is the Nirmānakāya, Padma Ḍākinī is the Svabhāvakāya, Karma Ḍākinī is Abhisaṃbodhikāya[1] (mngon par rdzogs pa byang chub, complete perfect enlightenment body). I myself am the Sambhogakāya.

Buddha Ḍākinī is the Dharmadhātu wisdom. Ratna Dākinī is the

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[1]*mngon par rdzogs pa byang chub*, complete perfect enlightenment body

equanimity wisdom; Padma Ḍākinī is the discriminating wisdom; Karma Ḍākinī in the accomplishing activity wisdom and I am the mirror like wisdom. The five poisons, when purified, are the five wisdoms.

As for the view, meditation, activities, fruit and commitments. I am Vārāhī, the view. Buddha Ḍākinī is the meditation; Ratna Ḍākinī is the activity; Padma Ḍākinī is the fruit; Karma Ḍākinī is the commitment.

I, this ordinary woman, am the Wisdom Ḍākinī together with my entourage. I am Vārāhī, the consciousness. Buddha Ḍākinī is the aggregate of form. Ratna Ḍākinī is the aggregate of feeling. Padma Ḍākinī is the aggregate of discrimination. Karma Ḍākinī is the aggregate of volition. One should visualize us in this way.

I am the five essences of the Bodhicitta, the five nectars. Buddha Ḍākinī is the flesh and bones; Ratna Ḍākinī is the warmth; Padma Ḍākinī is the blood; Karma Ḍākinī is the breath.

So in this way this ordinary Labdron myself, am the five Buddhas and their consorts; I am the assembly of Ḍākas and Ḍākinīs, who all reside here collected in this palace myself. This is who I am, oh fortunate son.

All the essence[1] of all the fruits which beings enjoy come about in dependence on the earth element. Likewise, all the gods and goddesses arise in dependence on my five aggregates. Just like bees come to the place where there are beautiful blossoms of fragrant trees, so too, wherever I am, all the Ḍākas and Ḍākinīs collect.

Thönyon replied:

"E MA HO How wonderful. You are in essence completely pure, but those with impure vision perceive you as an ordinary woman. But for those with pure vision, you are Vajravārāhī, the five families of the Buddha, and the five Consort Mothers, the collection of Ḍākas and Ḍākinīs; all these millions of emanations are collected in you and emanate from you for whomever needs to be tamed. You enact various skillful virtuous activities and manifest in different ways to lead countless beings to liberation. Mother, you came to this snow country in these degenerate times, oh Great Mother[2] who is so very kind, I prostrate to you with my body, speech and mind. Through dependent arisings,

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[1]The text here reads *rtsi bdud 'dod dgu* instead of *rtsi bcud* referring to the essence. This is most certainly an orthographical error in the text.

[2]This is a reference to the Great Mother Prajñāpāramitā, of whom Machig Labdron is known as an emanation.

and karma and prayers, I have taken birth as your son and entered the Mahāyāna Dharma. I will take hold of your teachings and practice this holy teaching of cutting the demons as you, Mother Machig, teach it. I have achieved the signs and warmth (of spiritual progress) based on your kindness, my Guru. I remember you again and again. Please bless me. There is no way I could repay the great kindness you have known me. You have opened the door of your heart and given me all of your teachings. But even now, please, again, give me more of your teachings. The field-born Ḍākinī told me that there is a practice of making an offering of the body. Please grant me this complete teaching."

Machig replied:

"Oh son, endowed with faith, perseverance and wisdom, awakened one who is ready to continue those actions already begun, incomparable one who wants to hear more and more, Holy One, listen to me. Although previously I have explained this teaching of how to make the offering of the body, still here I will explain to you the stages of offerings, the special vizualizations and the way to perform these in great detail. Keep these teachings in your mind."

"In general, one must be able to differentiate between virtuous and nonvirtuous activities and should know about Samsāra in general and in

particular[1]. One should know about how difficult it is to attain the leisures and endowments and how easy to lose them; one should know what is purposeful and what is not; about the varieties of karma and about cause and effect. One should have my system of Dharma mixed well with one's mind, and should have undertaken the mental training of the Great Mahāyāna Vehicle and strive for liberation. A person of this type should always stay in a solitary retreat place and make the offering of the body. This is very important.

For such a person who engages in the stages of making an offering of the body, there are seven or twenty four points.

1. At the beginning one should generate Bodhicitta and invite the guests,

2. visualize the objects of refuge and do the mental training of the four immeasurables, and invite the field for accumulating (merit).

3. perform the eight limbed prayer, including prostrations and making offerings,

4. separate the body and mind and offer the mandala,

5. make requests and receive blessings

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[1]'In general' refers to the knowledge of the three sufferings, and 'in particular' refers to the various sufferings experienced by the beings of the six realms (Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, Switzerland, 1990).

6. offer the body and give the body

7. conclude with dedication and prayers.

Also, before beginning, one should examine the scary place carefully, and subdue the place with one's visualization. Then, sit on a comfortable seat and generate the mind of enlightenment with the eight main objects in mind, as well as all living beings. These eight are:

1. those enemies who hate one

2. interferers who harm

3. secondary conditions which interfere

4. karmic interferers

5. Bodily interferers

6. Interferers at scary places

7. One's own mother

8. One's own father."

To explain about the hated enemies:

First, the three external harmdoers:

1. Regarding those enemies who hate one, they are those who harrass one, even though one has not done anything to provoke them, They may hit, rob,

plunder, reproach, backbite and talk blasphemously about one in various ways. They may be either humans with visible forms, or beings that one sees in visions or in dreams, or who appear actually in the path of one's vision. Those beings who cause various occurences, frightening one speechless, causing one to shake and the hairs to stand on end, they may also be formless beings such as gods, or demons, these are known as the enemies who hate one.

2. The harmful interferences are those who endanger body and mind through illness and interferences, causing one to suffer.

3. Interfering circumstances are one's body, life, property, power, merits, which interfere in one's effort to attain liberation. These are the three external harmdoers.

As for the internal harmdoers:

4. Karmic interferer: This is known as the inborn ignorance or grasping to 'I' or mine, or the demon which always accompanies you. But whatever names you may apply to it, it is the one who does not let one attain liberation. And it serves as the root for generating all faults. It is that subtle aspect of the mind which brings all negativities and great loss. These interferers are kept very firmly inside oneself and guarded as if they were a great treasure, from beginningless time, they glue one's mind to all the variety of negative actions.

That is the interference of karma.

5. The bodily interference : From the time that one's intermediate state consciousness, the smell eater, enters the womb of the mother to when the present body is completely formed, up to the time that death is experienced and there comes the separation of all the flesh, bone, skin, up to that point there is something which says 'this is me, mine". There is this horrible non-human spirit which says 'this is me'. That 'spirit' brings and glues one to all unwholesome actions all interferences. This is called the bodily interference.

6. The interference of the frightening place is that being who is the 'landlord' or host of whatever place one goes.

These are the three internal harmdoers. Thus the outer and inner six guests.

7 and 8. Likewise, there is not a single being of those six categories of harmdoers and beings of the six realms who has not been one's father and mother. Thinking that all of them are one's own parents, one should meditate in this way. And especially, those parents who have produced the present body, we call them the main parents, and hold them very dear.

1. Generate the mind of Enlightenment and collect the guests

One should visualize especially the eight types of guests along with all beings of the three realms (above, on and under the earth). One should think about how much they suffer. Think of the sufferings of Samsāra in general and in particular the sufferings of the lower realms of life.

Then, think of the particular sufferings of each living being, that in order to free all these beings from their sufferings completely and lead them to the state of Enlightenment, 'I myself will attain Enlightenment. For that purpose, I will practice the Māhamudrā gCod and will engage in the stages of giving the body as an offering, without the slightest self-interest, not as much as even the tip of a hair. Rather, I should have the extraordinary thought to help others.'

And one should not just think this once and leave it at that, but should generate this Bodhicitta over and over again until one has actually generated the extraordinary thought for benefitting others. When one has definitely generated that mind of Enlightenment, then, without letting the color of that Bodhicitta fade, one should collect in front of oneself all of the beings who appear and exist. And in order to rescue them from the suffering of Samsāra, think that 'I take refuge in the excellent Three Jewels as the perfect object of refuge'. Also, since the exalted Buddha is the ultimate object of refuge, if one takes refuge in

the ultimate Three Jewels, those Jewels definitely have the ability to liberate me from the state of suffering. Although there exist worldly gods endowed with power and might; they are not yet liberated from Samsāra and so are still ordinary beings and cannot liberate others from existence. So they are not ultimate objects of refuge. Rather, I must serve as a leader even for those powerful gods. Therefore I am not going to place hopes in those worldly gods. As the perfect, enlightened Buddha is the only ultimate object of refuge, I will take refuge in Buddha. I will gather all those nonhuman harmful spirits in front of myself, and then I will take refuge in the Three Jewels.' And thinking in such a way, recite three wrathful Phats. Also blow the *kangling* three times. Thus, collect the gods and demons.

Also, as for that sound of the unfaulty *kangling*, it should be pleasant and have a strong, taut tone. It should be blown three times.

As for the characteristics of a flawless *kangling*: it should have the two joints entact and at best should be of whitish color. At middling, it should be slightly brown, and at the least it should be mixed white and brown. The color grey is faulty and not suitable for ordinary beings. With respect to its shape, it should be slightly bent, and should have a sharp upper edge. It should not bend to the left or right, and should not twist in different directions. It should

not have cracks, and should not be very thick and cracked, nor should it be extremely thick and very bent, nor should it be completely straight. It should not have an airy, unpleasant sound. The two joints should not be too small and flat. There should not be many bumps or holes on the bone; it should not be rough; should not have many edges, should not be flat, also it should not be unpleasant to the eye.

It should be from a person from between the ages of sixteen and sixty and should not be from a person who has committed suicide or has died from illnesses caused by non-human beings nor by accident or murder; it should not be from a person who has died from famine or born from incest, or from one who is barren, or from a butcher or one who has starved from lack of food.

These are the characteristics of a faulty kangling and such a kangling would not be suitable for use. It should not be without two joints; it should not have cracks, nor be from a person who died of leprosy; it should not be made of iron, copper, wood, or horn.

Especially, the horn of a black yak, as this is used in certain (wrathful) activities such as burying it underground (stuffed with wrathful substances), is an unsuitable object. If you blow such trumpets, the sound could be misunderstood by those who hear it and cause them to be upset, as it serves to

generate in them harmful mental attitudes. Also, wherever such an unsuitable object as the horn of a black yak horn is played, all varieties of nonvirtuous actions will occur. One should never keep such a trumpet made out of black horn.

Even though a human thighbone is one of the substances needed, one should never possess the kind with the faults mentioned above, since they are substances which generate faults. So one should be able to properly examine them to see that they are free from bad characteristics. If one wishes to keep a thighbone instrument, it must have the wholesome attributes.

A thighbone from a person who had great hate towards someone should not be used if that person was killed by a weapon before having gotten rid of the harbored hate. The thighbone from a woman with good characteristics, or from a monk who has kept all his vows, or from a person with great faith who tries to do good, or from a kind person on the Mahāyāna path, or from a person from 16 to 60, these are suitable. A thighbone from one who has died at a mature age (25 to 35 years) without having lost the power of thinking, or the thighbone from the right leg, is especially suitable to call Vīras, and from the left to call Vīrinīs.

When cutting the thighbone, it should not be cut from underneath the

corpse, but rather from above, exactly where it is bent. It should be cut between the first joint and the small round joint, but this should not be damaged. The thighbone has to be like the trunk of an elephant (intact). The head of the joints should not be damaged. They should look like the nose of a lion.

As for substances to call Vīras: particularly suitable is a *kangling* from one who was killed with a weapon at a mature age (25-35 yrs.).

To call Ḍākinīs: a thighbone from a woman with good characteristics is particularly suitable.

To call non-humans: any kind of thighbone may be used.

When one has procured a thighbone which is suitable for use, when blowing it for the first time, one should have the following visualization. The *kangling* should have a tone which enjoins all to listen. Think in this way: "Listen, all of you."

The tone should be fine and taut, yet pleasant, and should go out in such a way that it is heard by all three realms of beings, taking them away from whatever activities they were previously engaged in. They stop and listen with open ears and interest, and instantly have the wish to come to that very place from which the sound is coming.

Then, with the second blow: think, "All of you, gather here." Saying this, visualize that they hear and understand the sound in that way. Then there is a great rushing about and much movement as each one of these beings comes from its own place.

With the third blow, think that all are collected with a rush and great noise and gather in front of oneself as if gathering under a big tree. They all show respect and faith, and make respectful offerings and homage.

Then, say Phat three times, making the same visualization as when the *kangling* was blown.

2. Visualize the objects of refuge and meditate on the Four Immeasurables

In order to to protect all those guests who have been gathered in this manner from the sufferings of Samsāra, one should take refuge in the Three Jewels which should be visualized in the space above as before.

Second: The Three Jewels are explained as:

1. the outer jewels
2. the inner jewels
3. the secret jewels

4. the suchness ultimate jewels

5. close jewels.

First, the outer jewels:

At the height of one's forehead, about 1 foot away, precisely straight out from the middle of one's forehead and the length of one person's height, is a spontaneously arisen square, divine mansion, with ornamental architecture and various levels, in the middle of which is a spacious, vast jewelled throne supported by lions, on which is a variegated four-petaled lotus with rims. At the center of the lotus is a full moon disc, and at its center is the Great Mother Prajñāpāramitā. On top of her head is Buddha Śākyamuni, exactly as described in the meditation manuals. On the rims of the moon disc are the Buddhas of the ten directions. Above their heads, in the four cardinal directions are the deities of the four classes of Tantra. This is the (outer) Buddha Jewel.

I (Machig) sit on the front petal, as a blue dakini, surrounded by the four families of Ḍākinīs. On the right petal are the Bodhisattvas such as the eight close sons[1] and beside them, the Ārya community of Bodhisattvas ornamented with jewels and silks. Then, on the left petal, led by Śāriputra and

[1]Manjuśrī, Vajrapāni, Avalokiteśvara, Sayi-snyingpo, Drupa Namsä, Namkhä Nyingpo, Maitreya and Samāntabhadra.

Maudgalyāyana, are the holy community of Śrāvakas with shaven heads and barefoot, wearing the three Dharma robes and holding the mendicant's staff and begging bowl. All of them are sitting respectfully, facing the Mother Prajñāpāramitā. Above them, the Gurus of the transmission lineage, are seated like heaps of lotuses. They represent the holy community of the Sangha. On the rear petal are texts representing the Prajñāpāramitā and also mantras which are the essences of the Mother Prajñāpāramitā, the Māhamudrā and the practice of tranforming the four Māras into the path (i.e., the practice of gCod). All of those teachings are in the aspect of colorful texts which are resounding with their own sounds. They represent the (outer) holy Dharma Jewel.

On the right of the rim of the lotus are the male lineage protectors and on the left the mother lineage protectors, the ocean-like Vīras, the ocean-like Vīrinīs, the ocean-like pledge-bound (protectors).[1] All of these together are the outer three jewels. This is the tradition of all three vehicles[2].

(The inner three Jewels:)

1. The mind which visualizes oneself as the deity without being separate from this visualization for even an instant is the (inner) Buddha Jewel.

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[1]These are the outer Sangha (Spiritual Assembly) refuge.

[2]Theravāda, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna

2. The voice which is never separated from the essence mantra of the deity, and the winds which are never separated from the three letters which are the essence of the (enlightened) body, speech and mind when they enter, abide and exit. Regarding this, when the wind enters (when one inhales), it should enter in the aspect of OM, when it abides, it should abide in the aspect of AH and when it leaves (during exhalation), it should leave in the aspect of HUM. This special breathing done on a regular basis is the (inner) Dharma Jewel.

3. The body abiding in the definite positive actions of the ordained, this is the (inner) Sangha Jewel. These are the three inner Jewels.

As for the Secret Jewel:

1. Leaving all the delusions, such as the five poisonous delusions, right where they are, by seeing their essence as empty of inherent existence, thereby bringing about the arisal of Wisdom, that is the (secret) Buddha Jewel.

2. Seeing the actual nature of those delusions when they appear, as Wisdom, and experiencing the wisdom of the inseparability of bliss and Emptiness, and then composing Vajra songs, that is the (secret) Dharma Jewel.

3. Always abiding in that virtue (of the meditation on Emptiness) and benefitting others, that is the (secret) Sangha Jewel. These are the three Secret Jewels.

Then, as for the three Suchness Jewels:

1. Moreover, the stability of that actual nature of the mind which is free of all delusions and which is unmoved by any circumstances whatsoever, that is the (Suchness) Buddha Jewel.

2. The clear and sharp appearance of Emptiness, that is the (Suchness) Dharma Jewel.

3. Likewise, teaching Dharma for the benefit of others, out of abiding in the situation of the Mind (Emptiness), that is the (Suchness) Sangha Jewel. These are the Suchness Jewels.

As for the three Close Jewels:

1. The Guru which one perceives as the actual Buddha is the (close) Buddha Jewel.

2. The speech which comes from that Guru is the (close) Dharma Jewel.

3. The harmonious activities carried out by the Dharma friends, that is the (close) Sangha Jewel. These are the three Close Jewels.

Moreover, oneself should have belief in all these five types of Jewels, and one should think that all those gathered around one should at least take refuge in the three outer Jewels (even if they do not know about the others, they should at least know about the outer Jewels of Refuge).

Then, think that the six harmdoers and one's mother and father, these eight groups, along with all the beings of the three realms, all have fear for the sufferings of Samsāra, and therefore take refuge in the three most excellent Jewels of Refuge.

Think of this one-pointedly and imagine that this refuge has been generated in one's own mind and in the minds of all other beings. Then, one-pointedly, generate the mind of Enlightenment.

(Recite:)

"I and all others, until Samsāra is empty, take refuge in you, excellent three Jewels, we will have no other refuge than you. You know this. It's all right if we're happy or sad, sent high or low, whether we have bad circumstances, interferences, harmdoers, interferences and interfering spirits, whatever comes up, I take refuge in you three Jewels."

Thinking this way, in the very depths of one's bones, in one's belly and heart, and in the very center of the bones of the feet, joyfully, recite mindfully:

"Just as I am making these requests, so too are all other beings. The six classes of harmdoers, mother, father, all living beings, from now until we reach complete Enlightenment, take refuge in the Guru, take refuge in the Buddha, take refuge in the Dharma, take refuge in the Sangha, take refuge in the

assembly of deities, take refuge in the Dākinīs and protectors. Please grant us great blessings."

Say this 100 or 21 times, thinking that just as one has just taken refuge, all those around recite in this way with a great sound. Then, recite Phat. With this sound, the requests are concluded.

Then, from the mouths of the three Jewels come the words:

"Oh, Children of the Family, abandon all of your negativities and nonvirtuous actions, never be separated from faith and respect, we will definitely help you."

Then, from the body, speech and mind of those Refuge Jewels come rays of light of many colors, emanating out to oneself and all others. All the negativities which have been collected through body, speech and mind are purified. The body becomes like crystal, clear and pure, and then the three Jewels place you under themselves. In that sphere, the three Jewels of Refuge, the one taking refuge and the deities and gods there also, all of these, the three aspects of the refuge, should be placed in the sphere of the profound *nonobservability emptiness (mi-dmigs pa stong pa nyid)*[1]. One should ascertain

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[1]This is the 'emptiness not-observing as truly existent' *(bden grub pa ma dmigs pa)*, i.e. not observing the conceptions as object.

definitely that neither the objects nor the one taking refuge exist ultimately.

This is called the pure Meaning Refuge.

As for the supreme way of taking refuge, since it is the pure meaning refuge and the view of Emptiness, one should know likewise both the pure Meaning refuge and the view of Emptiness.

Then the Four Immeasurables:

1. Immeasurable Love
2. Immeasurable Compassion
3. Immeasurable Joy
4. Immeasurable Equanimity.

As for the first, Immeasurable Love, of all living beings that are intent on harming one, there is not one which will not be or has not been one's father or mother. One should think, 'those beings have countless times provided me with all the necessities and comforts. They have protected me from negativities and bad name. Therefore all living beings are my mothers.'

Then, seeing that all these mothers are suffering, think, 'I must get rid of all their suffering, and for this purpose, I will give those living beings my body, enjoyments, merit and its seeds, and until Samsāra is empty I will enact this purpose, so that these mother living beings will have happiness and the

causes of happiness.'

Thinking this one-pointedly is called love which has living beings as its object.

Then, as for its ultimate meaning, there is nothing which ultimately exists, not even as much as the tip of a hair. Nevertheless, we do not understand (appearances) to be merely like magician's illusions or dreams. Therefore, we grasp these wrong appearances as truly existent and engage in negative activities, thus inevitably experiencing resultant suffering. So I will free all these mother living beings who have to endure these unbearable sufferings from self-grasping ignorance, and will show them the wisdom of one's own mind (i.e. Emptiness), I will lead them to the state of complete Enlightenment. Thinking this is the love which has all excellent Dharma as the object (of reliance).[1]

Likewise, [understanding that] those who are the object of this meditation of love, namely all those mother living beings and the one who does the meditation on love, oneself, and the essence of the mind which wants to help others, do not exist from their own side, they are empty. Then, without losing

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[1]This means that through the teachings of Dharma, they are released from suffering and endowed with happiness (Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, 1989).

the color of that understanding of Emptiness, keeping the mind free of the extremes of elaboration, without dualistic attitudes, in the very center of space, is called the great love with no observation (*dmigs med*).

One should meditate on this for a long time and completely integrate one's mind with this state. This is called the immeasurable love. Thus, these kind mothers are unhappy and full of suffering. They have the causes of sufferings and are already experiencing the results of those causes. They are ignorant with respect to how to abandon the causes of suffering and they do not have the secondary circumstances to enable them to abandon suffering. They do not rely on qualified Gurus; they do not have the needed guide for their blindness.

These mothers have not obtained any control over their own minds and are strongly under the influence of delusions, and therefore are like crazy ones. Since they engage in all kinds of negativities, they are in Samsāra in general and in particular they suffer the suffering of the three lower realms of life. They are under unbearable sufferings of the three lower realms. They are very needy and do not have any object of refuge. They have not even a moment of relief from suffering. Rather, they experience an unbroken stream of suffering. 'Oh, all those poor mother living beings.' Thus, generate such a great

compassion for them that it brings tears to one's eyes. One should meditate in this way until tears actually come to the eyes.

These suffering mothers see sufferings and the causes of sufferings as ornaments (to be worn) and at the same time they grasp to true existence where there is no true existence, they grasp to a (truly existent) self where there is none; they see what is impermanent as permanent, and suffering as happiness. They are attached to all the enjoyments in life, not seeing that they are just illusory appearances as in a dream. So again and again they enter the doors to the lower realms of life. Oh, those poor mothers (thus generating compassion). One should think that you will free them from such sufferings. This is known as the compassion which has all living beings as its object.

The minds of all these mothers who are not free from suffering are full of a very strong, cherishing attitude. Therefore they do not see the meaning of impermanence even for a moment. Even if they would wish to undertake spiritual practice, the practice would be done with the distorted state of mind which grasps (persons and phenomena) as truly existent. So the practice would not be successful. Rather, it would instead add to generation of more delusions, such as pride and arrogance. Thereby they would accumulate the greatest causes for existence. 'Oh, all those poor mother beings, those poor things,

those poor things'.

So, one should think, 'I myself will free these mother beings who are not free from the grasping as truly existent. I will make them understand selflessness by showing them the wisdom of one's own mind, that is, the Emptiness with which one can distinguish all phenomena. I will place them in the state of Buddhahood by separating them from suffering and its causes'. This is the compassion with Dharma as its object.

Moreover, the object of compassion, the one who generates the compassion and the essence of compassion itself all have no true existence. So from their own nature they are empty. Thus, without losing the color of Emptiness, that type of compassion without observation, like the space, is known as the *dmigs pa med pa'i* compassion. This compassion combined with Emptiness is called the Immeasurable Compassion.

But since these types of love and compassion are not generated in oneself, one does not recognize the living beings as kind mothers, and instead has discrimination towards them, seeing them as either enemies or friends. Therefore, through the resulting negative actions, they experience a great deal of sufferings in Samsāra.

Think, 'How happy I would be if all living beings would have my

happiness and merits. In order to place them all in the state of happiness, I will take their sufferings upon myself. May all their sufferings and the causes of their sufferings, all their negativities, their causes and the results, come to me. I, myself, give my own body, enjoyments, dignity, power and merits and their roots, of the past, present and future, without even for a moment trying to gain anything for my own sake. I give my body and life to benefit all the mother beings, causing them to be endowed with happiness and the causes of happiness'.

Moreover, one should meditate on the joy of that thought.

And for the purpose of all living beings, especially the harmdoers, think, 'Whatever occurs to me, such as illness, suffering, secondary conditions, enemies, interferences, may I bear it all without becoming discouraged, and may all the suffering of all living beings ripen upon me and may I be endowed with their suffering. May all living beings be freed from suffering and be endowed with a very special happiness. That would be even better (when the beings, having been freed from their sufferings, also are endowed with happiness.)' One should generate this Mahāyāna thought.

Likewise, it is important that this joy is free of directions, One should know that all this has no true existence and is like a magician's illusion. This

is known as immeasurable joy. So thus, by means of love, compassion and joy, the mind of great love wishing to help living beings out of great love, if it is free of all directions, this is the Mahāyāna generation of the mind. Then, one should know that loving care itself is also free of self existence. So, in its very nature this loving care is free of attachment. Knowing that the non-attached loving care and the mind are indivisible, is known as the Great Equality, being equal in terms of their Emptiness.

Thinking that I myself am the only one to lead all those beings out of Samsāra's sufferings is known as the extraordinary thought. Regarding all the aspects of this extraordinary thought, first, this extraordinary thought has the vast aim of helping all living beings. First, ordinary beings, who have attachment and hatred toward beings, therefore have living beings as the object of that attachment and hate.Then there is attachment and hate itself. One has to examine the essence of these three.

The living beings who are the objects of attachment and hate, as well as their body, minds and sufferings and the essence of that attachment and hate, are all non-existent from their own side. One should ascertain this well. Then, having found the meaning of their state of 'not truly existent', since there is (truly) no object of attachment, then the great mind free of self-grasping

having no attachment will arise. Likewise, when one undergoes analysis of the body, mind and sufferings of those beings whom one hates, and the one who does the analysis of the other's body, mind and suffering as well as the essence of that hate, the great mind free of self-grasping having no hatred will arise.

Then attachment and hatred will be freed in their own places. Then, if one experiences the same taste (of all persons and phenomena) in the sphere of Emptiness which is the Dharmakāya, this is known as the great equality which is free of attachment and hatred. One should know all the meanings regarding this Emptiness and should not forget this mind which has been transformed into Emptiness. All subjects and objects in the sphere of Emptiness are of the same taste. The mind should know this and abide in this Emptiness, then one will be free of all grasping as truly existent and also will be free of attachment and hatred. After one has trained in these Four Immeasurables, then one has to complete the training and actually integrate this training with one's mind completely.

Then, regarding how to think of the visualized objects for collecting merit and purifying the negativities of oneself and others: Above the head of one's ordinary body where the wind enters is a variegated lotus, and a moon-cushion, on top of which is the Sambhogakāya aspect (of Machig Labdron),

white, holding a damaru, vajra and bell sitting in crossed vajra position, on the forehead OM, throat AH and heart HUM. From the HUM lights radiate, going out to the Mother Prajñāpāramitā in the space visualized earlier, inviting the mind of the Mother Prajñāpāramitā. Light goes out from the heart of the Mother Prajñāpāramitā to all the assembly of deities, inviting their mind's (blessings). These enter again into the heart of the goddess Prajñāpāramitā, and then from the heart of Prajñāpāramitā the Wisdom Being Prajñāpāramitā along with all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the 10 directions are invited. They all come to the space above. Think that the space is completely full with the objects of refuge.

Om Sarva Tathāgata Sapārivāra Vajra Samāya Dza Dza ---

Om Sarva Tathāgata Sapārivāra Argham Pratītsaye Svāhā Pādyam Puspe Dhūpe Āloke Gandhe Naividye Shapta Ah Hum Svāhā

Thus making offerings.

Dza Hum Bam Ho. Saying this, the wisdom beings dissolve into the commitment beings and completely merge with them.

Light radiates from the heart of the Mother Prajñāpāramitā, touching all the deities in the entourage, from whose hearts light radiates to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the ten directions, gathering all their power and collecting back

into the heart of the Mother Prajñāpāramitā. From her heart come white, red and blue light. The white light, like a stream of milk, enters into the crown of the head of oneself and all the spirits collected around one, purifying the negativities, obscurations, and negative actions together with their imprints that have been committed with body, speech and mind from beginningless time. All the negativities and obscurations together with their imprints come out of the body just like dirt being cleaned out. From the head down to the toenails, and out through the toenails and lower doors these negativities and imprints go out to the demon of death, or the Karma Yama, or the Lord of the *lan-chags*[1], black in color, with a very wrathful appearance, and wide-open mouth. All the negativities in black aspect go into his mouth. Think that the Lord of death has been satisfied and one has paid back all those to whom one has been karmically indebted. One's body and the bodies of all others become like a beautiful piece of crystal, completely purified. Think that Machig Labdron in Sambhoghakāya aspect on the crown of one's ordinary head dissolves into myself (Machig) as Great Mother Yum Chenmo Prajñāpāramitā in the space in front. The obscurations and negativities of oneself and others are all purified and one develops a strong faith. Then, with a very concentrated one-pointed mind,

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[1]These are those beings to whom one is karmically indebted.

everyone rises and makes prostrations. Think in this way.

3. Offer the eight-limbed prayer with prostrations and offerings

Recite in this way.

I prostrate to all the Gurus, who show the wisdom of one's mind.[1]

I prostrate to the meditational deities, who are the definite treasure of attainments.

I prostrate to the Holy Dharma which is free of attachment and pacifies the condition of suffering.

I prostrate to the Holy Assembly, who give great meaniong to whatever is offered.

I prostrate to the protectors who definitely pacify all obstacles.

I make prayers to you, until the state of Enlightenment is achieved.

[The Seven-limbed Prayer]

I take refuge in you.

I make offerings with the objects of the five desires.

I confess all unwholesome actions.

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[1]This is the *nges don gyi Yum Chenmo*, that is, Emptiness.

I rejoice in the virtuous activities of all sentient beings. Please turn the wheel of Dharma.

Please remain without going into the state of nirvana.

I dedicate all the virtues for the sake of all living beings'. (Thus offering the seven limbs).

PHAT Through hearing the Phat, the guests understand it as the sound telling them to remain seated. Those who were standing and offering prostrations now sit down. Visualize thus, and make great offerings to the deities in the space above. With the understanding of Emptiness, make the offering on an Ultimate level.

Again, whatever one conceives through the different organs, all transform into offering goddesses and offering substances. Those not-truly-existent goddesses hold not-truly-existent substances for offering. Visualize the offerings completely filling the space.

In terms of the billion world systems, whatever forms there are, think that all these are in the form of Buddha Ḍākinī. All sounds are Vajra Ḍākinī. All smells are Ratna Ḍākinī. All tastes are Padma Ḍākinī. All touch is Karma Ḍākinī. Also, form is called Buddha Ḍākinī. This is the actual meaning of the Māhamudrā, free of the conceptuality of self-grasping. Those non-compounded

phenomena should also be regarded as offerings of great bliss, free of conception. Saying that all sounds are the goddess Vajra Ḍākinī, is also known as the secret Māhamudrā -- that all appearing and existing phenomena of Samsāra and beyond have no true existence. In this way the offerings should be known as offerings without elaboration. This is the meaning of the Māhamudrā, free of the conceptuality of self-grasping. Saying that all smells are Ratna Ḍākinī, is also known as the various indefinite appearances which arise, meaning that they are free of grasping and holding, and therefore should be known as offerings free of attachment and inclination. Saying that all tastes are Padma Ḍākinī is also called 'without attachment', and should be known as offerings of equality free of faults. Saying that all touch is Karma Ḍākinī, is also called the 'great absence of any kind of effort'[1], meaning being free of all effort of following after ultimate and conventional phenomena.

So, whatever appears to one's mind should be regarded as great offerings which have no true existence, are self-liberated, self-born, non dual, non-conceptual, and unidentifiable. Therefore all the objects, that is the objects of the offering, oneself and the offerings have no true existence. One should

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[1]One does not have to exert any effort to *make* phenomena be free of inherent existence. They *are* free of inherent existence.

understand this activitiy of offering on the basis of not having any true existence.

If you condense those five Ḍākinīs, they can be collected into three, body, speech and mind. The five consorts can also be collected into three; form, sound and conceptions.

Whatever forms appear should be visualized as the goddess of form, holding a mirror in her hand, clearing away the living beings' attachment and imprints of attachment towards the form. The bliss of those forms should be offered to the Guru and the Three Jewels. Think that the Guru and Jewels are pleased and the attainments of the body arise, purifying all the negativities and obscurations of oneself and all others, endowing all with bliss. The blessings of their body enter one's body.

All sound should be visualized in the form of the goddess of sound holding a guitar, and clearing away all living beings' attachment towards the sound. The pleasantness of the sound becomes an offering to the Guru and the Three Jewels. Think that the Guru and the Three Jewels are pleased and the blessings of their speech enter into one's speech.

All the conceptions of the mind appear in the form of the goddess of Dharma, holding a double tetrahedron, clearing away the distorted view and

conceptions of living beings, purifying all the wrong conceptions of all living beings. Oneself and all others generate the wisdom of bliss and Emptiness. Then the living beings make offerings of bliss and Emptiness to the Three Jewels. They are extremely pleased and grant blessings to oneself and others, purifying all negativities. Visualize that one has been blessed with the wisdom of bliss and Emptiness.

Make offerings to the Guru and Three Jewels of Refuge with offerings of great bliss endowed with the inseparable great wisdom of Emptiness and the great bliss with the four joys of one's own wisdom. They are delighted and bestow the blessings of body, speech and mind. All the negativities and obscurations of one's mind and others' minds are cleared. The mind is endowed with clarity of Emptiness and great bliss. Visualize that all the blessings of the enlightened mind of the Three Jewels of Refuge enter one's mind.

Finally think that all the goddesses absorb into one's body. All the experiences of happiness and suffering are equal in the sphere of Emptiness, thus having no inherent existence. Remain in the natural clarity of the space-like sphere of great emptiness.

(Recite:)

"Whatever appears as form in the billion world systems,

I make offerings of the mudrā of the supreme body.

Bestow the attainments of the changeless body.

Whatever appears as sound in the billion world systems,

I make offering of the mudrā of the supreme speech.

Bestow the blessings of the unceasing speech.

Whatever appears to one's mind in the billion world systems,

I make offerings of the mudrā of the supreme mind.

Bestow the blessing of the mind free of mistakes.

Whatever experiences there are of happiness and suffering

in the billion world systems,

I make offering of the mudrā of nonduality.

Bestow on me the common and uncommon attainments.

If there is bliss, dedicate that bliss as Gaṇacakra.

If there is suffering, I take that suffering upon myself.

May the ocean of suffering of existence be dried up.

May the sentient beings of the three worlds be endowed with happiness.'

Phat Oneself being the offerer of the offering, the object of the offering which is the essence of the offering, the particulars of the offering and action of offering, all have no inherent existence. The ultimate offering is to remain in the meditation on Emptiness of not having any true existence.

4. Separation of the Body and Mind

1. Separation without basis
2. Separation with basis.

First, separation without basis. The mind should find the authoritative view of the great Emptiness which is free from birth, cessation and abiding. like the center of space, without true existence and free of all extremes. The body also should be understood as the reflection of that Emptiness, without any true existence. It should be realized as selfless. Neither should the mind be attracted to the body nor the body to the mind. Thus, they should be without attraction for each other, free of attachment either to the body or mind. Thus the mind and body and all phenomnena are freed from the thought of being either attached or nonattached. This is the Emptiness which is the great conceptionlessness. Thus, there is neither the thing that is transferred nor that which transfers. Thus separating the mind without the presence of any basis.

Second, separation with basis. Visualize the mind as substance. Holding this with one's memory, through mental alertness, and using the strength of that memory and mental alertness, bring the mind into the sphere of the unmistaken path. Pushed by the power of a strong wind, that mind is shot up into the realm of space, thus separating the body from the mind. The consciousness, relying on the drops, transfers to the crown in one's contemplation as one visualizes the mind as a substance. So keep this in mind, oh Son, and I will teach you well. Listen to these teachings.

Visualize the mixture of one's drops of white and red *bodhicitta*, the size of an egg which is laid in the new nest of the Ngangpo bird. It is white and shiny, oily and round, clear and pure, shining with its own light, about the size of the tip of the small finger, a well-proportioned and sphere.

Then, in India, in the south of the Potari Mountain, is a blue rock the color of lapis lazuli, in the center of Zangpö Pal cave, in the form of a double tetrahedron. The inside (of the cave) is red with five-colored rays shining like a rainbow, extraordinarily beautiful and having many great qualities. The Vīras and vīrinīs, Ḍākas and Ḍākinīs, always gather in that cave. At the time when I lived there, in the sandalwood forest, there was a bird, partly blue and partly green with white wings shaped like half moons and five tail feathers of

five colors. The legs were the color of pearl, the claws and beak white, the eyes reddish. From the neck to the head it had the same colors as a peacock. At the crown were three red feathers sticking straight up, with a top-knot projecting many colored lights. That bird never kills any bees, insects or any living beings. When she walks she never touches her feet on the ground. She is always perched on the tips of flowers. She always makes pleasant sounds which one hears as TĀRE and TUTTĀRE in a most beautiful manner. She is constantly singing these sounds. She enjoys partaking from the corolla of the flowers. She eats camphor and many different medicinal seeds. She usually sleeps in the corolla of the camphor plant.

She unites with her partner by joining the two sexual organs, thus enjoying the contentment of breathing, and gives birth to two eggs, through her mouth, and leaves them in the nest of that camphor plant. Out of these two eggs come two birds, one male and one female. These two are blessed by Ārya Tārā. Someone else has said that they are not ordinary birds. If you take the droppings of those birds as medicine, all the different 424 illnesses can be cured. If you burn the droppings, the 84,000 spirits will not have any effect on you. If you use the droppings as an ointment, you will be free of any kind of skin disease. If you eat the flesh, you will achieve the supreme Enlightenment.

If you get one of their feathers, you will get the common attainments. If you see or hear their sound, you will be freed from the three realms of lower migration and will be able to take birth in the god or human realm. Whoever is born where those birds are, and especially in the forest or mountains of that area, will not have to experience the suffering of lower migrations for one life time.

But those birds are extremely rare, and only those who are very fortunate and have very special karma would be able to see it. No one else would have any access to those birds. These two birds will try to establish close relations to birds, insects and all the beings in the forest by way of teaching, thus leading them onto the path of liberation. As soon as the two birds are grown up and can fly by themselves, the parent bird does not have any more attachment to the nest, to her birds, or to her country. She will depart either to the east, west, north or south and from then on will not make any effort to build a nest, thus showing disgust with existence.

These two birds have one nest and two eggs. The parent birds each go their own way, and since then they never build any other nest, and the family line of these baby birds is that of the new nest. Those who have very strong obscurations will not see these two birds. Just one among those who are very

fortunate would see these birds. The size of the birds is the same size as the *Chedzema* bird, with yellow-grey color and white eyebrows and moustache. The neck is longer than the *Chedzema's* neck. The shell of the egg of the bird is white with a slightly reddish color and oily, transparent like a crystal, radiating brilliance, having the capacity to eliminate darkness with in a range of eight cubits. Inside the shell is the skin, symbolizing the five wisdoms, colored white outside of which is, red, then yellow, then green, sky blue like the color of the sky and deep blue, the color of lapis. Inside this is a little drop the size of a mustard seed, of many different colors. Those various shades of colors are all together, but not mixed with each other, like the reflection in water or in a mirror. There are six different colors inside that skin, symbolizing the five or six families of the Buddha, and the light from those colors symbolizes the five consorts. The sixth Buddha is the main Buddha, Vajradhāra. Visualizing in this way has a great dependent arising of the five or six Buddha families. By visualizing one's own consciousness like an egg of that bird one accumulates great merit. In the egg of that bird are the five Buddha families and the chief of the Buddha families, including their own respective consorts, with the five wisdoms present in the egg.

Thus, for whoever thinks of that bird and visualizes their own

consciousness in the form of that egg, and transfers the consciousness using this visualization, there will not be any great hardship in attaining the supreme Enlightenment. There is no doubt that one will not attain the state of Buddhahood in one single lifetime, O son. O listen, son, you need this visualization for the transference of consciousness.

Sitting on a comfortable seat, one should relax the body and the mind in an unmoving state. From that relaxed state one should sit in the seven-pointed posture of Vairocana, and exhale three times, thereby exhaling all the negativities and obscurations which one has accumulated physically, verbally and mentally, along with all of one's internal impurities, which go out in the form of air.

Then, having cleaned out one's outer and inner body and mind completely, the inside of one's body becomes like a balloon being blown up, empty from the crown of the head to the bottom of the foot, inside of which, at the crown, neck, heart, navel, and secret place are the five energy *chakras* or wheels, like two hats joined together. The lower ends of the two channels are even with the central channel. The two ends join, either inside the central channel or the two secret lower ends continue through the thigh and go down to the soles of the feet.

Or, rather than thinking of these cakras as 'hats', think of two lotuses facing each other, or two umbrellas facing each other. Think in this way.

Then, regarding the transference, there are two: transferring stage-by-stage or the simultaneous transference. With respect to the stage-by-stage transference through the so-called six realms of life, visualize that one stands, touching the inner ankle joints together, and holding the two hands in the mudrā of the double tetrahedron at the crown. Inside the right foot is a little red drop, and in the left foot a tiny white drop the size of a grain at the time of the fortunate aeon, the nature of light. With that visualization one should draw up the air, with a wrathful recitation of *Phat*. At the secret place the two drops, white and red, mix with each other and meet, and the two are mixed together, becoming the size of an egg of the *Maser* bird, in the nature of light. One can hardly look at it because it is so luminous and shining, like the very center of the sun. It is moving and ready to fly at any moment.

With the second *Phat*, it is transferred to the navel, then the heart, neck, crown and brahmin opening. As soon as it departs from the opening at the height of about one cubit in the space above, it becomes a dark blue syllable HA, shining and brilliant. These are the instructions of the transference of consciousness with observation for those with pure karma. Departing from the

opening of the crown, the empty space, the stainless consciousness and Emptiness are inseparably mixed. Thus one should remain in the equipoise of inseparable Emptiness and consciousness (lasting about 21 inhalations and exhalations) -- counting each inhalation and exhalation as one. That is one session.

Then, regarding the simultaneous transference: One may do either method, the stage-by-stage or the simultaneous, whatever is convenient. In both cases the consciousness is transferred into space, and, mixing with space, one should remain in that state of equipoise. Doing that twenty-one times is one session. Do this for twenty one days and nights. At the time of ending the session, visualize a red lotus with eight petals at one's heart, on the very center of which is one's consciousness. Think that the lotus closes up. Either then you fall asleep or you enter the activity of the post meditational period. So thus the instruction for training in the transference of consciousness with observation.

One may wish to do the practice of simultaneous transference and also the actions that will take place at the time of death:

(As for these,) at the height of one cubit above one's head, visualize myself (Machig) in the Sambhogakāya aspect. Your own heart is a red lotus with eight petals, in the very center of which is the central channel, white

outside and red inside, as thick as a medium- sized bamboo plant. The upper end comes out of the *brahmin* opening at your crown and touches my heart center. The lower end of the channel presses down the petals of the lotus flower. Think that on top of the center of the lotus is your own consciousness. When the signs of death occur , in order to strengthen and sharpen one's concentration, focus the mind, and then, in order for the signs of death to occur, say *Phat*.

With this, the consciousness, in the form of light, ascends through the light tube and absorbs into the mandala in my (Machig's) heart center. Visualize that the lotus and the channels are all in the nature of light. The lotus symbolizes nonattachment; the bluish center of the lotus symbolizes loving kindness. The red petals symbolize compassion and the white corolla represents Bodhicitta. The channels are whitish outside, symbolizing method, and red inside, symbolizing wisdom. The channels also vanish with the departure of the consciousness. As the consciousness departs, the radiance of the lotus degenerates. This is the visualization of the transference of consciousness with observation at the time of death.

As for the transference of consciousness based on substances: transferring the consciousness into the birthless space by visualizing the bird's egg, rely on

the substances of the white and red drops, and transfer it into the birthless space.

This is the tradition of the yoginī myself, oh Son. If you perform this for the sake of a dead person, then at the soles of the feet are the hell realms, at the secret region the preta realm, at the navel the animal realm, at the heart the human realm, at the neck the *asura* realm and at the brain the conch house abode of the gods.

When the consciousness departs from the brain center and mixes with space, one visualizes that the person is being saved from the six realms of life, going beyond existence and attaining the state of Nirvāna, thus leaving the special dependent-arising imprint. That is known as the transference of consciousness based upon the six regions of life. Keep this is mind.

(Offering the Body as Mandala)

Thus, separating the mind from the body and visualizing the body in the form of a mandala, offer it to the Guru, the Three Jewels, Yidams, Vīras, Ḍākinīs, Dharma protectors. Here is the method to make that kind of mandala. Listen and I will explain.

The blue syllable HA at one's crown transforms into a blue Dākinī[1] with one face and two arms, the right holding a curved knife and the left a holding khatvanga with one point, surrounded by four other identical Dākinīs. Think that these five Dākinīs, peel the skin off of the dead body[2] with their curved knives and spread it on the ground.

PHAT Think that the ground becomes the mighty golden ground.

PHAT Think that the blood becomes an ocean-like amount of blood. Visualize that it is sprinkled over the whole ground. The nails and fingers become the fence.

PHAT. The two arms and legs become the four continents. The eight secondary limbs become the eight secondary continents, in the center of which the trunk of the body becomes the supreme Mount Meru.

PHAT The head on top of the trunk of the body should be visulized as the victorious palace of the god Indra. The right eye is the moon and the left eye the sun. Visualize thus.

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[1]The editor of the text has added here that the Ha represents the yellow Ratna Ḍakini holding in the left hand a wish fulfilling jewel (see text *Namshä Chenmo*, p. 188.2).

[2]Or the body of the dead person for whom the meditation is being performed.

The teeth are stars; the lungs are the miraculous horse. The heart is the wish-fulfilling jewel, granting all wishes like an abundance of rainfall. The white and black intestines are the golden mountains and lakes of enjoyment; all the rest of the inner organs take the form of the seven symbols of the kingdom. All the veins and sinews of the flesh become the eight auspicious substances.

PHAT The eight collections of consciousness turn into the goddesses of desire.

PHAT The flesh becomes the supreme medicines.

All the hairs of the body become effortlessly produced fields of maize, meadows of marigolds, saffron and sandalwood forests.

PHAT The ears become the umbrella and banner.

Visualize that all the excellent riches of gods and humans are complete here, and are presented to the Gurus, meditational deities and the hosts of Ḍākinīs.

(Recite:)

"The skin is the golden ground, surrounded by the fence of nails and fingers.

The trunk is Mount Meru complete with Indra's palace.

The two eyes are the sun and the moon.

The four limbs are the four continents.

I present this complete body mandala as an offering to the Guru, theThree Jewels, the assembly of deities, the Ḍākinīs and Dharmapālas. Please accept it and bestow your blessings."

PHAT Saying this, place the offered mandala in the sphere of nonobservability of all: (i.e. the offering), the object and subject of the offering. This is the Ultimate offering.

5. Make requests and receive the blessings

"I make requests to the Root Guru on the lotus and moon seat at the crown of my head.

I make requests to the assembly of deities in the divine mansion of the pure appearance of all phenomena.

I make requests to the protectors endowed with the wisdom eye, who keep the pledges and protect the teachings of the Buddhas.

Bestow your blessings on all living beings. Guide me, your child, into the birthless sphere. Bestow the common and uncommon attainments. Bless me to bring all negative circumstances and hindrances onto the path."

PHAT. Saying this, make earnest requests to the Guru, meditational

deities, protectors and so forth, and with a strong and concentrated mind, visualize in the space above, myself, (Machig) as the meditated object of refuge. From my heart center (Machig's) an identical form emanates together with four Ḍākinīs and surrounded by hosts of Ḍākinīs. They come to the place where you are meditating. They will remain there about one cubit away from your crown, thus bestowing blessings.

(Recite:)

"Although in the sphere of the Dharmadhātu (Emptiness) there is neither coming nor going, out of your compassion which is ultimately ceaseless and spontaneously-arisen, come here with your miraculous powers. Oh mother, please take care of all your followers, all the living beings who are ignorant ant full of illusions. Bestow on us your ultimate blessings. Mother, from the sphere of the Dharmadhātu, together with your hosts of Ḍākinīs, please let a rain of blessings fall on this scary place.

Please hold with your compassion, all the gods and demons who have gathered at this haunted place.

Bestow your blessings to the living beings of the three worlds.

Bestow your attainments on me, your beloved son.

Please remain as the crown ornament on the top of my head

and grant your blessings. PHAT."

With that recitation, a multitude of Ḍākinīs together with myself (Machig) gather noisily and bless the mindstreams of all who are present. All are deeply moved. Think that oneself and everyone generates a strong faith. That is the Suchness blessing.

6. Make the offering of the body and practice giving

This have five parts:

1. blessing the body into the 5 desired sense objects and visualizing clouds of offerings, offering them to the Guru, meditational deities, Ḍākinīs and, Dharmapālas.

2. paying back the debts to those to whom we are indebted

3. giving to the six realms of beings and emptying the six realms. 4 . giving everything that is desired to the white direction landowners and nagas

5. giving piles of fresh wet flesh and blood to all the fierce, harmful gods and demons.

As for the first: blessing the body into the 5 desired sense objects and visualizing clouds of offerings, offering them to the Guru, meditational deities, Ḍākinīs and Dharmapālas:

Separate the body and mind as has been explained earlier. The consciousness which departs from the crown should be visualized as a red syllable HAM. It should be sent into my own (Machig's) heart center. Then from the natural red HAM (at my heart) comes a red action Ḍākinī with one face and two arms, the right holding a curved knife and the left a skull cup, ornamented with the bone ornaments, very magnificent, standing with both legs in dancing posture.

Reciting PHAT, red rays of light emanate from the heart center (of that Ḍākinī). They touch my heart center (Machig's). My mind is moved and light emanates from my heart center, touching the Ḍākinīs surrounding me. That causes identical Ḍākinīs to emanate from them. All these become the entourage of that red action Ḍākinī. Dark red rays come from my heart center and go into the red Ḍākinī, adding to her majesty. She becomes very powerful. All these Ḍākinīs become very active. Raising their curved knives, they lay the body on the ground with the head facing east, the size of three great universes. The body is spread over the whole ground inside the fence, about the size of four continents, or of one continent, or the size of Tibet, or of one's dwelling place, or about 500 paktsäs, or the size of the range of one's eyesight. One should visualize whatever size that one is capable of visualizing.

That ground should be very pure and golden, and on this, from the air element of the body, a wind mandala arises. In its center the blood element of the body becomes the fire mandala, adorned with the syllable AH. On top of that are three human heads. From the syllable AH comes a huge, spacious skullcup with the forehead facing onesef, inside of which are all the flesh and blood and bones, cut into small pieces, in a pile the size of Mount Meru. On top of this appears white Bodhicitta, like a moon, with the syllable HUM on top and marked with a HAM underneath. Think in this way.

Then, from the seed syllable in the heart of oneself as the action Dākinī, light emanates, going out to the letter YAM, activating the wind mandala, causing the fire to burn and the flesh and blood to boil.

From one's throat center rays of light emanate. The light goes to the pile of flesh and blood, transforming it completely, making it dissolve into light.

From the syllable OM at one's crown, light rays emanate, touching that moon-like Bodhicitta and causing it to melt. From the letter HAM come streams of nectar, which go into the skullcup. From the HUM, light radiates in the ten directions, inviting all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, in the aspects of the Buddhas of the five families, together with their consorts. They all gather into the space above and unite. Streams of nectar flow from them,

causing the syllables HAM and HUM to melt and fall into the skullcup. In this way, the commitment and wisdom beings are mixed. The steam from the boiling substances in the skullcup rises, filling all the space. At the tips of the steam vapors are the Vajra goddesses of form, sound, smell, taste, and touch, the goddesses of the five desired objects, together with the goddess Dharmavajra, goddess of the water offering for the mouth, goddess of the water offering for bathing, flower goddess, incense goddess, light goddess, perfume goddess, food-offering goddess, sound-offering goddess. All these offering goddesses hold in their right hand a skullcup filled with nectar and in the left hand the corresponding offering substances. They make offerings while performing dances.

Rays of light in the form of various symbols, such as banners, umbrellas, canopies, flags, hanging decorations, the eight auspicious symbols and the seven symbols of the kingdom, as well as all types of musical instruments, all are complete. Think that there are unthinkably vast amounts of offering substances, filling the whole sphere of space like an assembly of clouds.

All the root and lineage Gurus, the multitudes of deities of the mandalas, the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Pratyekabuddhas, Śrāvakas, are presented with these offerings, bringing about great delight.

Think, 'Please take hold of us physically, mentally and verbally. Protect us from going on the wrong path, show us the correct supreme path.'

Thus requesting, recite PHAT.

In this manner one presents the offerings to one's meditational deities and to the hosts of deities of the four classes of Tantra, to the Vīras and Vīrinīs, and to the (Ḍākas) and Ḍākinīs. Having delighted them, they bestow the common attainments of body, speech and mind and the uncommon attainments. Especially, having gone on the path of the flawless unsurpassable path of highest Tantra, please grant me the ability to unerringly practice the path and to accomplish all the practices of the path.

PHAT.

And then, reciting Phat, make the offerings to Śrī Mahākāla, Bektse, and to all the male and female protectors on the outer and inner levels, pleasing their minds, and then request:

May all of our desired purposes be accomplished.

Bless us that we will not meet with demonic obstacles on the path and ground.

Bless us to fulfill the purposes of all beings and to cause the Buddha's teachings to flourish through the four types of virtuous activities, and to be a

source of power and support. PHAT

Thus requesting, recite PHAT in a wrathful manner, visualizing as clearly as possible.

Then, reciting Phat, see all the offering, the offering substances, and the offering goddesses together with the light which has been emanated from one's mind, as empty. Having generated the body as the five desired objects, and offering these to the Gurus, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, meditational deities, Ḍākinīs, outer and inner Dharmapālas, and their being pleased,is the Suchness offering of the body as offering substances.

Again, if you wish to emanate the goddesses with skullcups and with vases filled with nectar, you may do so here. I will not explain it now, as it has been previously explained.

Then, for the second part, paying back the debts to those to whom we are karmically indebted.

Recite PHAT, and think that the wind activates the fire, causing the nectar in the skullcup to transform into all the desired substances for all the guests to whom one is karmically indebted.

Or, one may leave out the visualization of the fire and wind and so forth, and just visualize that the body is laid out there.

As for the guests of karmic indebtedness, they appear in various colors representing beings from the four continents, both male and femle. They are all good-looking, wearing different types of clothing and ornaments. Concentrate especially on these guests and think that they are especially drawn to oneself. Each guest receives their own share of the offerings, which adds to their brilliant, majestic appearance. They are then completely freed from their motivation to take revenge for their debts, and in place of the revenge they felt for their debtor, they develop a special interest and motivation for Dharma.

Visualize that various types of substances spontaneously arise in great amounts, including one's body, life, wealth, dignity, power, brilliance, color and glories, prosperity, spontaneously arisen palaces, calves, horses, elephants, silk cloths, all types of jewels, grains, pots, dresses, flesh, blood, sinews, skins, all the parts of the body, perfect desired objects, flowers produced from one's body hairs. Desired offering substances come from five ultimate pots, in the nature of rainbows. The breath, wind, warmth, steam, all cause whatever is wished for to spontaneously arise in great amounts. Think that all those to whom one is karmically indebted, including all the classes of interferences, have received all the objects which they could possibly desire.

Whatever life one has taken, thereby incurring debts of life, whatever

beatings one has inflicted on these beings, thus having the debts of frequent sickness, whatever one has robbed from others, thus having the debts of being in frequent poverty, think that both the male and female guests to whom one is indebted belonging to the classes of the 80,000 spirits and 18 classes of children spirits, all of them find complete satisfaction and contentment. They have no grudges nor feelings of revenge left. The guests are completely satisfied and happy, and are freed from their suffering. They ultimately attain the state of Enlightenment.

Then, reciting PHAT, leave the mind in the sphere which thinks neither of the guests nor the offering *tormas*, (i.e. Emptiness). Remain in that way for some time. That is the ultimate meaning of the offering of the *tormas* for those to whom one is karmically indebted.

Third, giving to the six realms of beings and emptying the six realms.

In a spacious, huge, white, crystal, jeweled vessel, free of all defects inside and out, one's body melts into light. Or, the remains of the torma offering that was given to the guests of debts, melts into light, and then transforms into a nectar of undefiled wisdom, white in color with a slightly reddish hue, endowed with the hundred supreme tastes, the taste of which has the ability to completely eliminate all sufferings completely, and is endowed

with the capability of bestowing all the objects of desire, to restore life, and to heal the sick. Just by touching this nectar, all sufferings are cleared away.

From one's heart center comes a white Ḍākinī with one face and two arms, holding in each hand a skullcup. Visualize that countless forms of the Ḍākinī go to each living being from the peak of existence to the most tortuous parts of the hell realms, giving a skullcup to each living being, thereby freeing them all at that very instant from whatever suffering they are experiencing. They are then all enlightened, and Samsāra is suddenly empty. The hell realms become the color of lapis lazuli, and of the vajra nature. The preta realms become the color and nature of ruby. The animal realms become white and pure like crystal and become the nature of the white, pure wheel. The human realms become golden and pure, in the nature of precious jewels. The asura realms becomes like emerald, pure and in the nature of the crossed vajra. The god realm becomes clear and empty, with five colored lights, in the nature of the great Wisdom. Thinking this, recite PHAT.

If one is not able to do a simultaneous visualization of all six realms of life, then one can do the visualization in the following order:

First, in the hell realms: Send out goddesses to each being in the hell reams and give them nectar. Think that just by tasting that nectar and seeing

that skull cup in the hands of the goddess, all of them, even those persecutors in hell, as well as those beings in the hell regions, are completely freed from the sufferings they experience caused by hatred, such as sufferings of heat and cold, and they attain the state of complete Enlightenment.

That burning iron ground turns into lapis lazuli with a vajra nature.

(Second), in the preta realms the sufferings of hunger and thirst are pacified.

(Third), in the animal realms the sufferings of ignorance and of eating one another are pacified.

(Fourth), in the human realm the sufferings of attachment and constant hurrying about busily are pacified.

(Fifth) In the asura realm, the sufferings of jealousy and struggle are pacified.

(Sixth), in the godly realm, the suffering of pride and change of birth are pacified and they attain the state of complete Enlightenment.

With that, recite *Phat*.

One's offered body is like the wish-fulfilling gem, which showers forth everything that beings desire. It brings about the pacification of suffering in all regions of life and leads all beings to the ultimate state of Enlightenment.

Since it is not possible to collect all the beings of the six realms for this torma offering, one emanates goddesses to all the six realms of life and sends out offerings of nectar to all of them. This is known as the offering to the beings in the six realms.

Analyzing the sufferings of the beings in each of the six realms individually brings about such strong compassion that one is moved to tears. Then, leave the torma, the vessels, guests, beings of the six realms of life as well as the mind which has done this offering, in the sphere of Emptiness. This is known as the Ultimate meaning of the offering to the beings in the six realms.

4. Giving everything desired to the Zhidag (white direction landowners) and Nāgas.

Whatever is left from the previous offering, one may think of it as a torma offering to the landowner gods, or think of it as a fresh corpse and generate it as torma offering, or, separating the body and mind, visualize that the brain, the substances in the spinal cord and fat are transformed into yogurt, milk and butter (the three white substances). Recite Phat.

Then, visualize that the blood, oil and pus are transformed into the three

sweets -- crystal, raw sugar and honey. The marrow transforms into camphor, saffron and medicinal substances. The skin, the white tissue under the skull and the diaphragm become clothes and fine dresses made of silk and copper threads, of two types, with and without sleeves, garments of clothing in a variety of colors and in immeasurable amounts.

Visualize the heart as a wish-fulfilling gem, the two kidneys as gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, red pearl, diamond, coral, and all types of jewels.

Think of all the flesh as different grains -- barley, rice, etc. The twenty-four joints in the spine are wild goats, antelope, and all types of game animals. Think of the seven joints as tigers, leopards, and other wild beasts. The eighteen ribs are arrows. The air passage and the esophagus become different-colored space. The life channel becomes the miraculous horse. The white and black intestines are all transformed into different wools in different colors. The channels and sinews become all different colors. All the steam from the mouth and the teeth transforms into sheep. The nails become different kinds of birds. The pancreas turn into cows and oxen, the lungs into horses, the liver into elephants.

The eight great joints, i.e. the four bones of the feet and hands, the neck, and the lower part of the kidney region and chest, become armor, weapons, copper,

gold and silver vases, plates, and so forth, out of precious substances. The head transforms into a shell cup; the stomach and lower part of the stomach turn into houses and homes, treasure rooms and granaries, country houses and palaces. The eyes and five organs become a variety of flowers. The white and red bodhicitta, excrement, urine and bile become the five immortal ambrosial nectars -- yogurt, milk, butter, sugar and raw sugar. All the bodily hairs become the branches of trees, petals, leaves, flowers, fruits.

Visualize and invite the local gods (Zhidags). First, keep in mind their forms, colors, and six sense organs. The local gods and Nāgas should be invited in a peaceful manner.

The Zhidag gods should normally be visualized as having a white complexion, but this is not always the case; they may be visualized as blue, red, yellow, or white with a reddish shade, or blue with a whitish shade, or red with a yellowish shade. They may have all types of complexions, like the fine forms of human beings.

The length of their face is about two cubits; their eyes and ears are similar to those of the gods. Their faces are long; the eyelashes and eyebrows have the same colors as their bodies.

Their hair may be black, light grey, dark grey, orange and blue, very

long, thin and soft. It is bound in a top knot in the middle of the head or at the back of the head with a crown ornament, with some hair on the forehead and falling plaits hanging down. This is the shape and form of the hair of the local gods.

Their eyes are very colorful, the tip of the nose very high and slightly bent, having a smiling expression, with a very clear and brilliant face, and broad, round chin, in the center of which may be a coil of hair.

They wear many varieties of hats. They hold rosaries of shell, glass, pearls, gold copper, iron, coral, turquoise, and flowers. They carry various implements such as magical splints, nooses, sabres, axes, hammers, sickles, lances, swords, and staffs. They ride on various wild beasts such as tigers, leopards, bears, lynx and snow leopards, wolves, jackals, foxes, wild dogs and lions, or on snakes, garudas, vultures, eagles, cranes, peacocks; or on domestic animals such as yak, sheep, goats, cows, and game animals like deer, wild ass, elk, antelope, or on crocodiles, otter, and other water creatures.

They wear clothing made of skins of the above animals, and upper clothing, loincloths and skirts of wool or cotton with many colors, all kinds of materials, felt and many different colored clothing. They have dresses for the upper and lower body and shawls. These are their special clothes.

As for their horses: There are white horses with red tails and mane, with black legs and blue or red hooves. Or, there are yellow horses with white mane and tails, with blue legs and green hooves, or black horses with yellow mane and tail, green legs and red hooves; or blue horses with green mane and tail, yellow legs and black hooves. Or there are white horses with black spots, or red horses with yellow spots, or yellow horses with blue spots, or black horses with white spots, or blue horses with red spots. They are spotted all over the body.

Besides these, there are other horses who have the head, body, legs of the same color, but having variously-colored hairs. These horses have extremely long ears, high heads, big, black eyes, very long legs, very big tails, with a full body, very shiny coat and are very magnificent and majestic.

There are also camels, donkeys, and wild yaks used as riding animals for the Zhidag. Their saddles may be made of gold, silver, copper, iron, crystal, *mchong*[1], shell, stone, hard leather hide, and wood.

All the previously explained dresses, carpets, saddle rugs, are made out of these types of materials: they have bridles ornametns with pearls. They are adorned with a variety of clothes and head ornaments. These are the

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[1]A precious, transparent stone said to cure paralysis.

descriptions of the saddles and the carpets for the saddles.

The female Zhidag have a color and shape very much like the males. As I said before, they have ornaments of shells and flowers on the head and neck. The females have hair hanging down and hold rosaries made of shells and flowers. Some others hold mirrors made of gold and silver, arrows with cloth attached, guitars, flutes, a mixture of flour and butter, vases filled with all kinds of instruments. At the right and left of them are mules, doe, camels, pigs, bears. These are the special vehicles for the female Zhidag.

On big, open fields, they collect like fog, very slowly. The retinue of those Zhidag follow behind riding donkeys and yaks, even rabbits, and bad, wild beasts like porcupines, and bad winged creatures like bats, or bad water creatures like tadpoles. Some Zhidag even ride on such vehicles.

Those in the retinue who travel by foot have even worse colors, are also smaller in size, but their class is about the same. They hold many things in their hands, like wooden sticks for cleaning, spinning wheels, brooms, looms, balls of yarn, leather ropes and bellows. The ones going on foot follow about 500 arm spans behind. All the guests gather with a great noise. They are extremely satisfied with whatever is offered. They are happy, content and satisfied. Their complexions clear up; they become very tame and peaceful.

They generate faith and with great respect they perform anything that is being ordered. Think that they have generated Bodhicitta.

Recite:

"This body of mind, consisting of substances, is turned into the three white substances and three sweet substances[1], and a variety of medicines, clothing, jewels, grains, objects of enjoyment, horses, axes, elephants, treasures, wealth, flowers, medicinal plants, woods, in short, whatever is wished for by the Zhidag, in inconceivable amounts. There is nothing that I do not have. I offer whatever you look for and whatever you need. I make offerings to you Zhidag. Take these offerings without leaving any remnants. Take these, and may you be happy. May all your ill will and bad thoughts be pacified. May you be endowed with Bodhicitta and may you ultimately be endowed with Buddhahood. PHAT."

Then, meditate on Emptiness in terms of the guests, as well as the substances and the mindstreams of those guests. Or, if one wishes to give those Zhidag work to do, one may enjoin them to form a 'posse' to get back something one has lost, for example. In this way, all the guests rise with very

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[1]These are milk, yogurt and butter and sugar, raw sugar and honey, respectively.

serious expressions, in a wrathful manner, with an upset expression in their eyes and looking rather hateful. Think in this way.

They are wearing armor and helmets and are ornamented with tiger skins and bearskins; they wear vulture and garuda feathers, and carry swords, arrows, and spears. In their left hands they hold a bow, and in the right hand a quiver and arrows made of hard leather with sharp spears, adorned with white cloth.

The female Zhidags hold nooses and writing slates, sabre, ax, sickle, hammer. They ride on tigers, leopard, all varieties of wild beasts. They are adorned with snake ornaments. They move like yellow clouds blown by a strong wind. When they have gathered around you, give them the flesh and blood.

Then they become even more wrathful. Now, concentrate on the purpose for which you have called them, and instruct them to perform that duty. Concentrate on the destruction of the enemies which you have entrusted to them. The enemies are destroyed and the consciousness is sent out to the sphere of the Dharmadhātu. You should concentrate on those prayers, Oh Son.

Do not propagate this teaching very much. Rather, keep it in your heart. If there is a great need for such action, with regard to protecting the teachings

of the Buddha, then it is worthwhile to do such actions, but, if one does these types of actions for the sake of oneself, it is not good. In that case it would be a breach of one's commitments and with me, because in that way, it would bring bad karma and a consequent rebirth in the lower realms. So therefore, keep this instruction extremely secret and endeavor to protect the teachings. These instructions are called the Precious Jewel Lamp of how to make offerings to the Zhidags. Keep these in mind.

As for the generation within oneself of the desired objects for the Nāgas, Listen Son. Visualize a new corpse. The flesh, bones, veins, sinews and innards such as blood, pus, head hair and bodily hair the teeth, nails, all should be put in separate piles. From one's heart radiates light, emanating to all that flesh and blood, transforming it into pinkish-white nectar, having the quality of immortal wisdom, and great radiance. Recite PHAT, and think that all the bones are the best medicines, the blood is transformed into milk with the essene and taste of thousands of buffaloes. The nectar, medicines and milk are mixed together, becoming different waters such as ponds, pools and lakes, having the eight qualities. Likewise, the white and black intestines transform into the seven lakes of enjoyment, the seven layers of the skin transform into seven golden mountains; the belly, esophagus, and bladder become fine houses and

treasury rooms. The lakes and waters are all in the form of palaces for the Nāgas.

The heart becomes the wish-fulfilling gem, the kidneys are three- to eight-sided jewels; the joints are jewels having from one to eight eyes, fulfilling from one to eight wishes, as well as an endless varieties of jewels; the lungs become various water horses and the liver and pancreas become water oxen and water sheep. The life channel should be visualized as the Sala tree, with white roots, trunk, branches, leaves, petals, flowers, fruits and treetop. It is extremely smooth to the touch, excellent smell, provides coolness. It has many qualities. It is one of the supreme trees. Its height is 150 *paktsă*. The branches have the length of fifty-one *paktsă* each. Think in this way.

The tissues which hold the lungs, the pharynx, and the secondary veins and capillaries and sinews all become a grove of different colored trees. Think that this becomes the place of enjoyment for the Nāgas.

The white and red *bodhicitta*, the urine and the bile become special medicines for the Nāgas. The nails become yellow water ducks, cranes and other birds, having very pleasing voices. The five sense organs become a great grove of flowers; the hair and all the body hair become Naga trees. All of these are extremely nice to look at, with very nice forms and shapes. As soon

as these trees are set in motion by the wind, they produce beautiful sounds, bringing great contentment to the Nāgas in the water. The objects of desire also produce good smells, bringing mental contentment through the olfactory organ.

Likewise, through the experiences of fine tastes (of the fruits of those trees), they have mental satisfaction. As soon as their bodies touch these trees they experience its smoothness, and are contented. Thus visualizing these incredible objects of desire.

Then, reciting PHAT, one should visualize the Naga guests.

All the Naga guests are in peaceful forms, and all are like eight year olds, with round faces, plump, extremely white, the eyes slightly yellowish whitish, shaped like barley grain. The ears are white, with a slightly reddish shade. The hair hangs down in loose pieces like brown crystal. The eyebrows and eyelashes are yellow, also quite long; the body is white with bluish waves of water, decorated with jewels, emanating the five colors. The joints and limbs, neck, ears, are ornamented and they wear ornaments on the forehead. Their teeth and nails are white with a slightly bluish tint. They wear a bluish water cloth as lower garment, and hold jewels in their hands and count on shell rosaries. When they walk on the ground they do not quite touch the ground,

but walk about a spear's length above it in the midst of blue fog (to receive the offerings).

They enjoy the objects of desire with great delight, bringing about an increase of their magnificence, color and radiance. The ornaments they wear also have a special radiance and luminosity. All the Nāgas are smiling and have minds full of loving kindness. One should think that they have generated a special faith towards you.

(Recite:)

"This body of mine, made of material form,
with its great milk ocean of blood,
the bones full of the medicine of the six goodnesses,
and the immortal nectar of flesh,
fill the three universes, the lakes, ponds, the little waterfalls,
the parks and wish-fulfilling trees, the groves, fine houses,
wish-fulfilling gems and good smelling medicines,
objects of desire of form, sound, smell, taste and touch,
all those objects desired by the Nāgas.

There is nothing that I do not possess. I offer whatever is desired or wish for.

I make this offering to the Nāgas and their families.

Take everything without leaving any remnants. May you be endowed with satisfaction and joy, eliminating all ill will and harmfulness.

May you be endowed with Bodhicitta and may you ultimately attain the state of fulfillment of complete Enlightenment."

Phat. The tormas and the guests should all be left in Emptiness.

Moreover, if one wishes to move these Nāgas to fierce action in order to get rid of enemies and interferences, first, at the time, all the Nāgas should be visualized in wrathful aspect, having nine, seven or five heads, with tails emitting black steam, red eyes from which come a rain of blood, and mouths from which come poisonous steam of various illnesses. From underneath their feet come snakes, scorpions, red winds of illnesses; from their hearts come black, poisonous fog. They hold in their hands lightning noose; from their nostrils come black clouds of thunderstorms, from their ears come meteors and from all the pores and openings of their bodies come lightning. From the place where their hooded head touches the brow, come hailstones. From all the openings of their bodies come sounds of thunking, breaking, whirring, of something collapsing, of something heavy falling, of dragons' roars, sounds of avalanches and mountains collapsing, or cracking rocks.

They are all black in color with blue nails. They are extremely tall, a hundred times the height of a person. They have many heads, but only a single lower part of the body. They should all be seen as belonging to the lowest class (Dolpas). Invite all these Dolpa-class Nāgas, and give them tormas of flesh and blood. Visualize that they become even more violent. If you send them to human beings, you should send them with *mamos*. If you send them for wealth, you should send them with *tsän* spirits. Otherwise, when you send them to get rid of difficulties or illnesses, you should be clear in your visualization about the purposes for which you use them. It is extremely important not to make any mistakes with respect to this visualization and to be skillful.

Those in the retinue of the Nāgas are those who look peaceful and have no jewel ornaments, and wear a cloth of water wool; their shape and sense organs are the same as the main Nāgas. Their bodies are slightly smaller and not as nice looking as the main ones. They touch the ground when they walk. They follow behind the main Nāgas about five hundred arms' breadth away.

Those in the retinue who are wrathful have a body about twenty cubits in height. Their hood is made of either three, two or one heads. They do not have flames of lightning or wrathful sounds. They hold in their hands the lasso of water and wind. They emit small hailstones and a little lightning. The

yogi, having achieved power over the winds, concentrating on the object, should think that this object is taken into one's power. At the time of peaceful purposes there is no need for low-caste Nāgas. At the time of wrathful attack, the Nāgas should only be visualized as belonging to the lower caste (Dolpas).

There are times when the Nāgas are sent out for the purposes of wealth, victory, getting rid of illnesses and negative circumstances. But the Dolpas should only be sent out against the enemies of the teaching (the wrong conceptions).

There are very many different types of Nāgas, but if you condense them, there are four classes: the royal class, the chief class, the Brahmin class and the lowest class (Dolpas).

Norgyal and Thunjung are the chief Naga kings of the royal class, and are yellow in color. Gawo and Jogpo are the chiefs of the Chief class and are red. Padma and Chule are the chiefs of the Brahmin class and are white. Tobgyu and Rigden are the chiefs of the Dolpa class and are black.

Third, to move them to action: Visualize them as either yellow, red or white. Normally, they are all white. Their eyebrows, eyelashes and hairs of the body are orange or white, having the same color as the skin. As soon as the Nāgas belonging to the Brahmin class, take on a wrathful caste, they

become green.

For the Nāgas of the lower caste, make only the red offering, and not the white offering. For the three upper castes of Nāgas, the red offering is unsuitable, so you should make special offering tormas. Keep that in mind and do not forget it. Practice this way.

When you move the Nāgas to action, visualize yourself as the owner of lightning. You destroy the object concerned with the black substances of the Nāgas. Do not propagate this, but hide it in the center of you heart. Unless there is a great need for the sake of the teachings of the Buddha, do not perform these actions. If you do such actions for your own purpose, you will contradict me and will take rebirth in the hell realms, so be skillful. These instructions should be hidden in the center of your heart. In this way you are one of my followers.

That is the absolute practice of making the *torma* offerings to the Nāgas, being able to distinguish between the peaceful and wrathful activities.

Then, 5. Giving piles of fresh, wet flesh and blood to all the fierce, harming gods and demons.

To those gods and demons who have very strong craving for flesh and

blood, one gives one's own flesh and blood. As you gather those gods and demons and bring them under your control, you should generate as a Ḍākinī who is completely capable of bringing all those gods and demons under control. Then transfer oneself into one's ordinary state and separate the mind and body. The consciousness in the form of the letter HA transforms into a terrifying Wrathful Black Goddess, Tröma Nagmo (*khros-ma nag-mo*). Or, one can also remain in the Dākinī form, as earlier, and then visualize that from the heart center of myself (Machig) in the space comes a dark blue HA which absorbs into the body of oneself as the Ḍākinī, becoming inseparable.

Either visualize oneself as a fresh, dead body, or visualize oneself in the form of that black Ḍākinī with one face and two arms, the right holding a fresh red human skin and the left blowing a thighbone trumpet. Gather all the harmful gods and demons under your control. Visualize that you wear an upper cloth of fresh, human skin with blood dripping from it, and a lower garment of tiger skin, a girdle belt of black skin, with mouth wide open and with terrible fangs, and a tongue like red lightning, the hair and eyebrows orange and coiling upwards, with one leg stretched and the other bent in the dance posture. By beating on the ground with a human skin, all the horrible gods and demons are frightened. Those hundreds of thousands of Ḍākinīs all hold a curved knife in

the right hand and a human skin in the left. With wrathful expressions, they cut the corpse and give the flesh to the gods and demons. Think in this way.

Visualize that the corpse still has some breath left and the warmth has not gone out of it, is youthful, corpulent, with soft skin and fine complexion, large and magnificent, with oily, pretty and pleasing flesh, covering the whole world.

Just seeing that corpse, all those gods and demons are mentally satisfied. They are instantly free of all their negative states of mind and are pacified. Think that they have generated a happy mind. Think that, just like bees gathering in a flower garden, all the gods and demons are collected, without any power and will of their own. At the time of giving the flesh and blood, think that the flesh and blood has not lost its warmth, but has steam coming from it. Also the fat and skin is oily and is endowed with the hundred tastes and has a fragrant smell like camphor or sandalwood, filling all the worlds.

Especially, during the red offering, one should give the flesh and blood to the guests collectively and also one by one, by means of these four:

1. dedicating the particular parts of the body to the particular god and demon guests

2. collectively giving the body to the collective god and demon guests

3. dedicating the particular parts of the body to the collective god and

demon guests

4. dedicating the body collectively to the particular gods and demon guests

But in whatever manner, the god and demon guests all gather around in an organized fashion; the fearsome ones stand with wide open mouths and bared fans, intent on the flesh and blood. Think that all those male and female demons are gathered all around oneself.

Of these four aspects or purposes, first, dedicating the particular parts of the body to the particular god and demon guests.

In order to give the flesh and blood, visualize oneself as the chief and say to the entourage of workers:

"All you hundreds of thousands of action dakinis,

The king demons should eat first,

The mother demon queens should eat first,

of this illusion-like form aggregate.

All you male king demons, take the upper part of the body.

All you mother demon queens, take the lower half of the body,

All you black Dolpas, take the waist.

All you eight classes of demons, take the innards.

All you king spirits, Senmo and Theurang, take the six receptacle organs.

All you outer gods and demons, take the six outer fleshes of the body; all you intermediate ones, take the intermediate three fleshes; all you inner gods and demons, take the three inner fleshes.

All you owners of the land, take all the flesh in general,

all you Dolpa Nāgas, drink all the blood,

All you flesh- and blood-eating Nāgas, take the sinews,

All you *btsan* spirits, take all the joints.

All you *rgyal-'gong*, take the radiance and brilliance.

All you *bSen-mo*, take the warmth and the breath.

All you interfering demons (*gre*) and demonesses (*gre-mo*), take all the veins and the ligaments.

All you *dam srid* and *bse-reg*, take all the hair and pores and nails and skin. Especially, all those who are intent on doing harm to me are all satisfied. PHAT."

Saying this, put the gods and demons and the flesh and blood, in the sphere of nonobservability, i.e. Emptiness, and remain in the sphere of Emptiness with respect to the gods, demons, and flesh and blood.

Second, giving the body collectively to the collective god and demon

guests. All those action Ḍākinīs, separating the flesh, blood and bones, make a mountain of flesh together with the inner organs and make a pile of those assorted parts. The bones are a mountain of bones, the blood an ocean of blood, and the skin becomes endless and excellent. Thinking in this way, recite:

"I, from beginningless time to now, have grasped to the self and therefore cherished the self. Earlier I had many excellent bodies, but I did not accomplish anything with them. Carried away by the demon of self-grasping, I have been wandering in Samsāra for a long time and have taken many bad forms countlessly, thereby accumulating various negativities, Then, the results of these negativities ripening on me, I have experienced various sufferings. From now on, I will not be attached and will not cling to the root of Samsāra, which is self-grasping.

In general, other living beings of the three worlds, under the power of self-grasping, have extreme clinging and attachment and are thereby stuck in Samsāra. Now, in order for them to get out of Samsāra I will give them this body. If some of them would fear the separation of their own body and mind, I will give my own body to the gods and demons as a substitute for them.

And especially, in order to pay back the kindness of my very kind fathers

and mothers, I will give my body to the gods and demons (so that these gods and demons will not hurt my fathers and mothers).

Earlier, I did not pay back the kindness of those to whom I have been karmically indebted from beginningless time up to now. Now, I pay back your kindness with this gift of my body. (Before, I took your body, possessions, etc.) Now I give you whatever you want-- this body and possessions. Thinking this, recite:

"From the peak of Samsāra and down,
and from the lowest hells and up,
all the gods and demons come here,
all you hungry ones, eat this flesh,
all you thirsty ones, drink the blood,
all you cold ones, wear these skins,
all of you, eat the bones and marrow, and be satisfied."

Think that they are all satified and have gotten rid of all of their negative states of mind. Saying *Phat*, one should not mentally engage oneself about any of those gods, demons, blood, flesh, nor the minds of the gods and demons.

Third, dedicating the particular parts of the body to the collectiive godd and demon guests. The action Ḍākinīs cut up and sort all the body parts,

flesh, bones and joints, the flesh making a big mountain of flesh, the blood a big ocean of blood, the fat making a big cloud of steam moving about, also, piles of the limbs and secondary limbs, and joints. All of them are arranged. Think this.

And then, to the gods and demons in general, give these particular offerings with these words: "The six parts of the outer flesh has six parts, the inner parts have nine parts; the joints have twelve parts. The big joints and smaller, all the joints, the ribs, spine, substances of the spinal column, head, brain, auxiliary parts of the brain, the eyes, nose, ears, tongue, lungs and heart, six receptacle organs, the fat, urine and blood, marrow, cartilege, bones, flesh, skin, arteries, veins, ligaments, merit, power and authority, magnificence, radiance and complexion, body, life and enjoyments, the hair and pores and teeth and nails, I give these to all the gods and demons which appear and exist. Take it all; don't leave anything behind." Think that all these gods and demons are completely satisfied and recite *Phat*.

Then, remain in the sphere of not mentally engaging in any of those previously visualized things (i.e. meditate on Emptiness).

Fourth: The action dakinis arrange piles of one's body. The skin, flesh, bones, inner organs are mixed up with the blood. Think that this huge pile fills

up the three realms.

The body, life, breath, shining radiance and color of the complexion, enjoyments, possessions, power and authority, head and bodily hair, teeth, nails--all of these, although actually flesh and blood, are in the aspect of all the necessities and desires of the gods and demons. Think that these are all there excellently, and then, call all the gods and demons individually by name, dedicating with this verse:

"All you eight classes of *bsen*[1], you *mu,* demons and *btsan*[2], Nāgas, interfering spirits, planet demons, Yamas, mamos, yaksas, *trul bum*, you class of *gnyan*, you big-bellied Nāgas, female demons, demons who harm children, you to whom we are karmically indebted, the class of interferences, classes of illnesses, lord of Yama, *gtong rigs, theu rang gre-bo, shi-'dre, pretas, byung-po, dam-srid, bse-rag, bya-ma,* interferences, karmic interferers, bodily interferers, host gods, local gods, all of these gather around, including those who send forth defilements or who send bad magical manifestations, all those

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[1]These demons and spirits are described in some detail in Panchen Lobsang Chokyi Gyaltsan's *Thar 'dod de dpon (The Guide for those Desiring Liberation)* in part three of this work.

[2]For descriptions of this and other demons and spirits, See R. de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet,* Graz, Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1975, 12ff.

beings who appear and exist who have bad minds, to all of you, I give this body, flesh, blood, aggregates. All are satisfied and pleased, and become endowed with a joyful mind."

Phat. Thus reciting. Then, all those in the retinue, collecting their portions, are all satisfied. Then, place the guests, flesh, blood and stages of the offering in the sphere of nonobservability (meditate on Emptiness). These are the stages of the offering of the body.

7. Concluding by way of Dedication and Prayers

As explained above, one should dedicate the virtue which was collected through the giving which has just been explained. One should make dedications extensively. Recite:

"My body, the merit and seeds of all these offerings, which have been made with Bodhicitta motivation, caring for all the gods and demons, and all the roots of merit of the three times, are dedicated for the purpose of all beings in the three worlds, including particularly the gods, demons, and wrongdoers. Likewise, based on the blessings of the dedication, may all the negativities and obscurations and bad karma in the mindstream of all living beings, the gods, demons, and harmdoers, be purified, and may they all complete the statges of

the six perfections and reach complete Enlightenment. Reaching the birthless state of the Mother (Emptiness), may they all reach the state of Lord Vajradhāra, the father of all the Buddhas, the Owner of all the Families. Attaining this state, may these living beings accomplish all the excellent activities for the sake of living beings until Samsāra is empty."

"And may those who are practicing the gCod, not have any self-grasping in the mind. May all living beings cut the ropes (of self-grasping) completely. Whatever good qualities arise for these practitioners, may they not have any sense of pride about those qualities. Whatever bad conceptions arise, may they not having any self-grasping pride regarding those. May this holy Dharma, the object of cutting the demons, pervade in all directions, like the sun and moon in the sky." Saying this, make the dedications.

Thus making many prayers.

Then, from one's heart light radiates, touching the heart of the Prajñāpāramitā Goddess in the space, from the heart of the Mother Prajñāpāramitā light radiates touching all the entourage. All the wisdom beings go back to their own places. The commitment beings to the right of the Great Mother Prajñāpāramitā dissolve into light and dissolve into the protectors behind, the protectors dissolve into the Śrāvakas at the left. All the Śrāvakas

dissolve into the Buddhas of the ten directions in front of the Great Mother Prajñāpāramitā. The Buddhas of the ten directions, and of the past, future and present, dissolve into Prajñāpāramitā. All the lineage gurus and the meditational deities of four classes also dissolve into the Prajñāpāramitā. The Mother Prajñāpāramitā dissolves into myself (Machig). The four dakinis in the entourage also dissolve into me. I become the essence of the Buddhas of the three times and come above your head, a yard above. Think in this way.

Oneself and others make many prayers to me (Machig).

Then recite *Phat*. From one's heart light radiates to myself above your head. I dissolve into light and become a ball of light like a bird's egg, and dissolve into your crown, transforming into the state of Avalokitesvara. Think in this way.

Then, oneself and others recite the six syllable mantra (*Om mani padme hum)* many times. Say PHAT, and visualize that all the guests, with peaceful and tamed minds, full of Bodhicitta, go back to their own places. One again transforms (from Avalokiteśvara) into a white action Ḍākinī and enters the path of (breaktime) activities, while abiding in the state of Emptiness like the center of space, (remembering that although appearances arise, they have no inherent existence).

Thus, the explanation of throwing out the body as food, without leaving anything out, but briefly explained.

At the end, do the dedication and prayers very well, putting the words and the meaning together, without making mistakes. Oh, you fortunate Four Sons and Four Daughters, you beings with pure commitments, may you accomplish the complete purpose for all living beings.

This ends the Fifth Chapter, "Throwing Out the Body as Food".

LINEAGES IN THE GCOD TRADITION

Generally all the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism refer to the same lineages of gCod, known as *Pha-rgyud* and *Ma-rgyud* (Father and Mother lineages). These are generally said to be the lineages which came from Phadampa Sangye and Machig Labdron, respectively[1] , although according to many lineages, both the *pha-rgyud* and the *ma-rgyud* are listed as coming from Phadampa Sangye (to sKyoton Sonam Lama) to Machig. Hence these terms *pha-rgygud* and *ma-rgyud* may actually be used in part simply to signify that there are two important figures, one male and one female, at the basis of the founding of gCod.

Also, the fact that only female figures are mentioned in some lists of *ma-rgyud* may be referring to the predominant role of the feminine in the Mother tantras, which this *ma-rgyud* represents, hence the emphasis on female lineage holders.

To outline the *pha-rgyud* father lineage, according to Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen, it contains two:

1. The lineage from Buddha to Mañjuśrī to (Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva) to

[1]Amdo Bamang, *gCod Commentary*, p. 454.

PhaDampa, is known as the lineage which taught Emptiness overtly, based on the Prajñāpāramitā teachings, and contains explicit teachings on Emptiness.

2. The lineage from Buddha to Maitreya to Asanga to Vasubandhu to Āryadeva to Phadampa, is the other lineage in which the Prajñāpāramitā is taught, but this time with the emphasis on the method (giving and the other Perfections), while Emptiness was taught implicitly. These two lineages joined in Phadampa and passed from sKyo-ston to Machig.[1]

Then, the Secret Mother tantra lineage, *ma rgyud*, is from Yum Chenmo to Tārā to Sukhasiddhī[2] to Machig. According to Je Tsongkhapa, this lineage passed from Sukhasiddhī to Āryadeva, to Phadampa to Kyoton to Machig, and then again, in Prajñābhava's *zab don snyan rgyud bla rgyud nam thar*, the mother lineage is from Yum Chenmo to Tārā to Dākinī Sukhasiddhī directly to Dampa Sangye to mkhaspa skyo-ston to bsod-nams bla-ma and then to Machig (p. 90).

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[1]ibid. In Prajñasvabhava's text, *Zab Don Thugs kyi snying po bla ma rgyud pa'i rnam thar*, p. 87, it states that when sKyo Sonam Lama was giving the Mahamaya initiation to many people, Machig also attended. He gave that initiation and also gave the gCod initiation, *nam mkha' sgo byed*, which Machig received from him at that time.

[2]See *gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 12, for the writings of Sukhasiddhī, pp. 279-334.

Common to the various listings of the *ma-rgyud*, Machig then gave both of these lineage to her disciples. From Machig, these lineages of the obvious and concealed teachings on Prajñāpāramitā (from Dampa Sangye) and the secret mantra from Sukhasiddhī are joined. This lineage is known as the *gnyis-med* or unification lineage (or inseparable Sūtra and Tantra lineage), also referred to as the Son lineage.

Other texts refer to two gCod lineage known as *pho-gCod* and *mo-gCod*, or male and female gCod. This refers to the persons to whom gCod was passed, the *pho-gCod* having been transmitted from Pha dampa to sMara Serpo[1], and the *mo-gCod* from sKyoton Lama to Machig. Regarding the gCod which Dampa passed to sMara, this refers to the Meaning (it did not have the name "gCod", but it did have the meaning), and Machig herself gave the designation 'gCod' to the tradition.[2]

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[1]Also, according to the *Blue Annals*, p. 997, Mara Serpo did not pass these teachings to many, but rather spent his time in retreat focussing on the practice of gCod and on Varahi.

[2]It should be noted that Phadampa did not term his system 'gCod', but nevertheless his teachings *were* gCod.It is generally said that Machig Labdron started this gCod teaching, and therefore arguments have arisen saying that gCod isn't an authentic teaching of the Buddha, as some critics have then concluded that Machig started an entirely new teaching called gCod. Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen points out that it is clear that Machig gave the designation 'gCod' to this system of meditation, but as for the *meaning* of gCod, it comes

In addition, there is also the visionary lineage of realization *rtogs pa byin brlabs kyi rgyud* from Machig Labdron, which she is said to have received from the Wisdom Ḍākinī directly[1] (just as those of Lama Tsongkhapa, Samten 'odzer, and others.)

Regarding how the lineage was passed from Machig: she had countless disciples, and among them, five who passed their teaching to the Mahāsiddha Gyanag Cherbu -- Gyalwa Dondrub, Thonyon Samdrub, Khambuyale, Khu Gom Chu Seng and Dongpo Zang thal. The Mahāsiddha *Gyanag Cherbu* received the lineages of the teachings of all five of these disciples.

We examine here the lineages received by the eighteenth century scholar Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen, who received eight different lineage transmissions, which we examine here, for they give us a very clear picture of some of the early transmissions of the teachings transmitted from Machig's direct disciples to contemporary times, as well as some of the visionary lineages, which were received by the various schools of Tibetan Buddhism, and which are even today unbroken lineages.

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from Buddha Śākyamuni. Buddha taught the meaning of this gcod at Vulture's Peak, the Prajñāpāramitā. *gCod Commentary*, p. 455.

[1]Prajñsvabhava, *zab don thugs kyi snying po bla ma rgyud pa'i rnam thar*, p. 90.

1. The *Zab Don* --from Gyalwa Dondrub (rGyal-ba Don-grub) and the four other disciples to Jamyang Gonpo

2. The *snyan-rgyud*

3. The *Zab Don nyen gyud*

4. *Gyalthang Samten Wo zer* visionary lineage (see again Northangs text in gcodtshogs)

5. *Pandita Punya Śrī*

6. *Khu sgom Chos seng*

7. *Ensa snyan-rgyud*

8. The *Shiwa Lam Zab* (from Gyalwa Dondrub to his son Khambuyale etc to khu gom chos seng.)

These will be briefly addressed in the next section.

1. 'Jam-dbyangs dGon-po -- zab-don thugs-snying lineage

Jamyang Gonpo *('Jam-dbyangs dGon-po)* , the very famous lineage holder, did not see Machig when she was living, but received the teachings from her direct disciples listed above. It is said that he was a great scholar and yogi. Although he did not see Machig directly, he is said to have seen her in visions and received teachings from her in those visions. He was said to be such

a great scholar that he both received teachings from and gave teachings to these five direct disciples of Machig.

It is generally said that there were two Jamyang Gonpo's, one being the direct disciple of Sakya Pandita and the other belonging to the Kargyudpa lineage,[1] perhaps both of which had the secret name Donyod Dorje.[2]

The Jamyang Gonpo responsible for passing down the gCod lineage from Machig to the present 20th century under the name of the *Zab Don Thugs snying* lineage, according to Monlam Thayas Gyatsho and Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen, was the Jamyang Gonpo who was the student of Sakya Pandita. He is considered to be equal in status to Son Gyalwa Dondrub, according to this tradition, and his teachings were known as the Zab Don lineage. He is the author of the *Zab Don Thugs snying* texts.[3] The other Jamyang Gonpo was the student of Lo-Ras, and was known by the secret name of Don yod rDo-rje.[4]

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[1]Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen, *gCod Commentary*, pp. 459-60.

[2]*Blue Annals*, p. 975.

[3]Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen, *gCod Commentary,* p. 460.

[4]ibid.

2. *Chos nyi rang grol -- snyan-rgyud*

The contemporary of Jamyang Gonpo, Chö nyi rang sgrol, whose teachings of gCod were known as the *snyan-rgyud* or whispered lineage, saw Machig Labdron directly in visions, and wrote the *snyan-rgyud*.[1]

3. *Lodro Rabnas -- zab don snyan-rgyud*

Then, *Lodro Rabnä,* a disciple of Chonyi rang grol, received Jamyang Gonpo's *Zab don gCod* from Jamyang Gonpo's disciple *bSod nam Rinchen*, and also received the *snyan-rgyud* from *Cho nyi rang grol*, and from here the *Zab don snyan-rgyud* began.[2]

4. *Gyalthang Samten 'odzer*

The Gyalthang (rgyal-thang) lineage passed down from rGyal-thang gSam-gtan 'od-zer, is an example of another visionary lineage. He wrote the *Muteg 'phreng-ba* and many other texts on gCod.

In the *Muteg 'phreng-ba*, he explains his visionary experience, from

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[1]Bamang Konchok Gyaltsen, *gCod Commentary*, p. 455.

[2]This lineage was passed on and continues to the present in the Zhi ba lam zab tradition of the Gelukpa school.

which his close or visionary lineage, began. He reveals that he was in Bobo Hla tse-bas when, one early morning, Machig appeared, accompanied by three women. Totally immersed in the vision, he was completely absorbed in clear light meditation until the sunrise of the next day. As he came out of the meditation, he was completely overwhelmed with joy; he had the feeling of identifying himself completely with Machig and Machig with himself.[1]

5. Pandita Punya Śrī

Pandita Punya Śrī[2] was a Kaśmīri and a contemporary of Je Tsongkhapa. He taught his lineage of the gCod to Je Tsongkhapa's disciple, Khedrub Je. Punya Śrī gave the Tro nag initiation to Khedrub Je.[3]

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[1]*gtam rgyud Mutig 'phreng ba*, pp. 257-279 in *gCod kyi gdams khrid lag len sogs*, p. 278.

[2]See *The Blue Annals*, pp. 242 and 1072.

[3]Khedrubje's *gsan yig* states that he received the gCod from the lineage from Sakya Pandita went to Cho-je Seng-ge, vol *ka*, *gsan yig* of *The Collected Works*, p.57.

6. Khu sgom chos seng

The lineage from Khu-sgom chos-seng was spread widely. He is often mentioned in the long lineage prayers, in fact, in all the lineage prayers of the lineages of the Gelukpa, including the lineage from Je Tsongkhapa which was later known as Ensapa whispered lineage, as well as the Zhi-ba Lam Zab lineage. In addition, we find him mentioned in the lineages of the other traditions as well.[1]

7. Shi-ba Lam Zab lineage

We know that the *Zhiwa Lam Zab* (*Zhi ba Lam Zab*) tradition of the Gelukpa school contains several different lineages, including the lineage as passed from Khu sgom chos seng, the *snyan rgyud* and the *zab don snyan-rgyud.*[2] The *Zhi ba Lam Zab* lineage contains the transmission from Machig's

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[1]See the lineages in Dharmasenghe, *History*, 509-514 for his biography and Kachen Sopa's *Ruby Garland*, pp. 25-26.

[2]Byams pa hla dbang rig 'dzin, *Ma chig mkha 'gro'i snyan rgyud lam zab gyi rnal 'byor khyer bde bkod pa*, fols. 8b, 9, 10.

grandson, Khambuyale, which he received from her directly. We find this lineage also in the Kargyudpa tradition, as found in the *Tshogs-las Rin-chen 'phreng ba.*

In the *Zhiwa Lam Zab* texts, the lineage from Khu sgom chos seng, is listed as from

Machig Labdron
rgyalwa don grub
kham bu ya le
thod snyon la ston
khu sgom chos seng
dol ba zang thal
rgya nag gcer bu
sangs rgyas rab ston
sangs rgyas dge slong
sum pa ras chen
sangs rgyas ston pa
chos rje rinchen 'bum
dzo ki ras pa
a ri ga wa
kun dga' bzang po
'gro mgon mdze snying
bsod nams rinchen
ma chig dkon lcam
byang chub rin chen
to the root Guru

Then, the *snyan rgyud* and *zab don snyan rgyud* lineages from Machig Labdron to

Chos nyid rang grol (*snyan-rgyud*)
blo gros rab gnas[1] (Here it becomes *zabdon snyan rgyud*)
ma chig dkon lcam
bsod nams dbang phyug
sngags 'chang sku mched
rdo rje rgyal mtshan
sangs rgyas bzang po
sangs rgyas blo gros
bsod nams lhun grub
dam chos mtsho mo
karma dar rgyas
lha dbang rig 'dzin
nga dbang phun tshok
kalsang tshoks gnyis[2]
skal zang cho wang
cho dan kal zang
Lobsang Rabten[3]

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[1]It is from Lodro Rabnä that Jamyang Gonpo's lineage joins this lineage. Lodro Rabnã received the teachings from Sonam Rinchen.

[2] Kere Ngawang Phuntsok passed the teachings to *Rato Losang Rabgye*, who passed them to *Kere Hlatsul Kelsang tso nyi* to the Guru of Amdo Bamang, *Sonam Dragpa* (d. 1789). Thukhwan also received teachings from Sonam Dragpa. Amdo Bamang received the teachings from both Rato Losang Rabgye and Sonam Dragpa. (Ven. Lodro Tulku, personal communication, Switzerland, 1990)

[3]Here, in the manuscript we examined, the lineage was added by hand regarding the masters in the lineage who follow after the author of the text, including Gelek Palzang (E Lama), Lobsang Yeshe, Gendun Gyeltsen, Gelegs Rabgye, Hlatsul Rinpoche. (personal communication, Lodro Tulku, Switzerland, 1990).

The lineage continues to the present day, having been passed to present gCod masters. The Sera Je master, Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche,

8. Lineage of Je Tsongkhapa

from which developed the *Ensa snyan-rgyud*.

According to Je Tsongkhapa's disciple Jampal Shenyen ('Jam-dpal bshes-gnyen)[4], Je Tsongkhapa received the long lineage of gCod from mkhas grub chos rje.[5] Je Tsongkhapa himself gives this lineage in his gCod commentary.[6]

In addition we know that Je Tsongkhapa received the visionary lineage from Mañjuśrī through Lama Umapa Pawo Dorje (dPa' bo rdo rje).[7] This work of Pawo Dorje is part of the *'Jam dbyangs Chos Khor*[8]. As for Je Tsongkhapa's visionary lineage, he received a teaching on gCod from Mañjuśrī, translated by Lama Umapa Pawo Dorje.

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received this transmission from Hlatsul Rinpoche in Tibet.

[4]slo dpon 'jam dpal bshes gnyen gyis mdzad pa'i *gcod khrid skal ldan 'jug ngogs chung ba*, in *gCod tshogs*, pp. 108.

[5]mkhas grub chos rje is also known as mkhas grub chen po gzhon nu grub. He was the Guru of rgod phrug grags pa.

[6]*zab lam gcod kyi khrid yig ma ti bha dra kirtis sbyar ba,* in *gcod tshogs,* p. 3. See also English translation in part 3.

[7]Dharmasenghe *History*, p. 550.

[8]See Pawo Dorje's gCod comentary, *gCod kyi khrid rje btsun 'jam dbyangs kyi gsung bzhin* in *gCod tshogs*, pp. 181-190.

In Jampal Shenyen's text we see the lineage described in terms of the textual lineage and the lineage of the oral instructions.

He gives the textual lineage as follows:

rgyal ba shakya thub pa (Buddha Śākyamuni)
rgyal tshab byams mgon (Maitreya)
'phags pa thogs med (Asanga)
mkhas mchog dbying gnyen (Vasubandhu)
Āryadeva
Phadampa Sangs rgyas
Ma gcig lab sgron
rtsi ston dar ma
khu sgom chos seng
(and so forth as follows below, up to
Je Tsongkhapa.

Then, Jampal Shenyen gives two lineages within the oral instruction lineage:

1. The Method Lineage.

ston pa (Buddha Śākyamuni)
'jam dpal (Mañjuśrī)
Āryadeva
Dampa Sangs rgyas
bsod nams bla ma
ma gcig lab sgron
khu sgom chos seng
dol pa zang thal
rgya nag gcer bu
sangs rgyas rab ston
sangs rgyas dge slong
sum pa ras pa

sangs rgyas ston pa
mkhas grub chos rje[9]
rje btsun blama tsong kha pa

2. The Wisdom Lineage

Yum chen sher phyin (Prajñāpāramitā)
rje btsun sgrol ma (Tārā)
Sukhasiddhī
Āryadeva
Dampa sangs rgyas
bsod nams bla ma
Ma gcig lab sgron
sras rgyal wa don grub
'jam dbangs mgon po
khu sgom chos seng
and then continuing as above to
Je Tsongkhapa

We know that Je Tsongkhapa taught the gCod only very secretly, but that he passed on the gCod teachings to rtogs ldan 'jam dpal rgya mtsho.[10]

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[9]Another lineage, received by Geshe Lobsang Donden, goes from Khad drub chos rje to phul-byung 'od-rgyal, to rgyal tsan kun ga, sam ten rdo rje, pal zang ten pe pel, je zung shes rab grub, lung rig rgya mtsho, thub stan nam rgyal to himself. *lam zab mo thabs shes kyi spyod yul stan thog gcig tu nyams su len tshul 'khrid chog dra las rnam par rgyal ba'i rgyal mtshan* in *gCod tshogs*, pp. 191-251.

[10]*Ruby Garland*, p. 38. Also Phabongkha, *sgyu lus tshogs su sngo ba*, Engl. trans. Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche, *Chod Cutting Off the Truly-Existent 'I'*,

According to the account given in the *Ruby Garland*,(p. 38) rTog ldan rGya mtsho accompanied Je Tsongkhapa to Wolkhar and spent three years there practicing *shug 'bru* and flower *chulen* practice At that time, Je Tsongkhapa had all of his visions of the *'Jam dbyangs chos skor*. It was shortly thereafter that rtogs ldan 'jam dpal rgya mtsho received the teaching of the *zab lam gcod kyi chos skor cha lag dang bcas pa -- The Profound Practice of gCod together with instruction regarding the necessary ritual objects.*[11]

And from there, the lineage continued as we see below, as found in Phabongkha's text *sgyu lus tshogs su ngo ba* (*Dedicating the Illusion-like Body as Offering*), and became known as the *Ensa snyan-rgyud*, following the time of Lama Ensapa.

Kyabje Phabongkha's gsan yig[12]

According to Phabongkha's listing of his lineage of gCod, he indicates, as does Je Tsongkhapa and others, that Phadampa Sangye had the Father, Son, Mother lineages , namely:

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pp. 15-16.

[11]*Ruby Garland, p. 39.*

[12]In Collected Works of Pha bon kha pa byams pa bstan 'dzin phrin las rgya mtsho, Vol. 1, N. Delhi. 1973, pp. 140-141.

The father lineage:

Buddha Śākyamuni
Mañjuśrī
Āryadeva
Phadampa,

The son lineage:

Buddha Śākyamuni
Maitreya
Asanga
Vasubandhu
Āryadeva
Phadampa,

The Mother lineage:

Prajñāpāramitā
Tārā
Sukhasiddhī
Phadampa

The long lineage, containing all three of these lineages, continues from

Phadampa Sangye to

Kyoton
Machig Labdron
Khugom
Dolpa
Gyanag Cherbu,
Sangye Rabton
Sangye Gelong
Sum ton räpa
Sangye Tonpa

Samdingpa Khedrub Marston
rtogs ldan wod rgyal
bkra shis rgyal msthan
kun dga' ye shes
bsam gtan rdo rje
rgyal gtan rdo rje
rgyal mtshan dpal bzang
shes rab grub pa
pan chen lung rig rgya mtsho
dge'phel wa rje thub bstan rnam rgyal
rgyal wa blo bzang don grub (Ensapa)
and so forth to Kyabje Phabongkha as in *sGyu lus tshogs su sngo ba* and on to the present masters.[13]

Kyabje Phabongkha also lists the short lineage (*Ensapa snyan-rgyud*) as

from

Buddha Vajradhara
Mañjuśrī
Je Umapa
Je Tsongkhapa
rtog ldan 'jam dpal.

Further, Kyabje Phabongkhapa gives his lineage of the Trosma

Nagmo, wrathful black Dākinī initiation:

Phawo Dorje
Je Tsongkhapa
rje Chos bzang dpal ba
rje dge 'dun grub (lst Dalai Je)

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[13]This lineage is held by many contemporary masters, including Zong Rinpoche of Ganden Monastery and Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche of Sera Je Monastery. See *Chod Cutting Off the Truly-Existent 'I'*, , p. 16.

Panchen yeshes rtse mo
rje chos ldan pa
dmar ston tshul trims rin chen
sngags rams pa dge 'dun bkra shis
rgyal dbang bsod nams rgya mtsho (3rd Dalai Je)
brag dgon spyan sngag gzhon nu chos dpal bzang
pha bong kha pa dpal 'jor hlun grub zur chos dyings rang grol --
(Teacher of 5th Dalai Je)
gnas brtan 'jam dyangs grags pa
khri blo gros rgya mtsho
stong 'khor wa bsod nams rgya mtsho
dkon mchog 'jig med dwang po
gun than bstan pa'i sgron me
sde khri 'jam dbang thub bstan nyima
brag dgon dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyal
sgrub khang blo bzang tshul khrims bstan pa'i rgyal mtsho
bde chen miyam nyid rdo rje
brag ri blo bzang thub bstan rnam rgyal
Kyabje Phabongkha

Ensapa lineage:

There are in this lineage the long lineage from Machig and the visionary or revelatory lineage directly from Mañjuśrī to Je Tsongkhapa via the translation of Pawo Dorje (Je Umapa). The lineage, from the time of Je Tsongkhapa, became known as the Ganden whispered lineage (dGa' ldan snyan-rgyud), and when it was passed down to Gyalwa Ensapa, it began to be known as the Ensa snyan-rgyud.

At the time, the gCod was passed only to one disciple at time in Gelukpa. It was considered very secret, and not to be practiced by everyone. Je

Tsongkhapa criticized its being practiced by those who did not see have the proper foundation of Guru Yoga, the necessary fundamental yoga essential for all further practice of the Buddhist Tantras, i.e. those who did not see the Guru and meditational deity (Yidam) as inseparable.[14]

Still, Je Tsongkhapa did teach the gCod secretly, passing it on to his disciple rTogs ldan 'Jam dpal rGya mtsho.[15] Many of his direct disciples wrote commentaries on gCod.[16] One can read the life stories of these disciples in the text known as *The Ruby Garland, (dga' ldan snyan brgyud kyi thabs shes gcod kyi gdams pa'i byung rabs pad rag gi 'phreng ba.*[17]

Je Tsongkhapa's disciple Khedrub Je received the early *zhibyed* teachings from Chos rje seng ge, and does not appear to have received the teachings of gCod from his Guru, Je Tsongkhapa himself. According to Khedrup Je's *gsan*

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[14]Khedrup Je (mkhas grub thams cad mkhyen pa), *rnam thar mkhas pa'i yid 'phrog ces bya ba*, pp. 5-31 in *mkhas grub thams cad mkhyen pa dge legs dpal bzang po'i gsung 'bum*, vol. *ka*, p. 14.

[15]*Ruby Garland*, p. 40.

[16]For example, bLo gros Bas pa, *gCod kyi gdams ngag phul byung gser gyi phreng ba, gCod tshogs*, pp. 151-180, 'Jam dpal shes gnyen, *gCod khrid skal ldan 'jug ngogs chung ba, gCod tshogs,* pp. 105-150.

[17] Found on pgs 1-90 of the *dga' ldan snyan brgyud kyi gcod kyi gdams pa'i skor. A Collection of texts of the Dge lugs pa tradition on the Good (i.e. gCod) practice transmitted in the Dben sa Snyan brgyud lineage of bkra shis lhun po by bKa' chen blo bzang bzod pa*, Vol. IV, Delhi: Dorje Tsering, 1985.

yig, he received Machig's *Common Nam mkha sgo byed* and *Uncommon Bramze Āryadeva text* and the texts of Machig's sons, *nang rig pa'i 'khrul gcod tshigs bcad ma* and *don dam thugs snying* and many others from Do-sa Rin-chen-'bum and sgrub-pa-po rtor-gzhon and others. When he was staying at Samding Dorje Phagmo near the Yamdrok Tsho Lake, he received the *mal gcod thun gcig ma* of mkhas grub chos rje from chos rje ye shes dpal wa.[18] He also received all of the teachings of Ḍākinī Sukhasiddhī from Chos rje nam mkha'i rnal 'byor pa.[19] He includes in his *gsan yig* a short biography of Machig Labdron, in which he tells that she took birth in Tibet in order to get rid of the four outsider Ḍākinīs (See part 1 of this work).

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[18]Khedrup Je, *gsan yig*, vol. *ka*, p. 57.

[19]ibid, p. 113.

Texts translated in Part Three

We have chosen to translate the five texts included in Part Three because of their clarity in expressing the meaning of the gCod meditative ritual practice.

Matibhadra bLo bzang Kirti (Je Tsongkhapa) -- (1357 - 1419)

1. Je Tsongkhapa's gCod commentary *zab lam gcod kyi khrid yig* was written under the name Matibhadra bLo bzang Kīrti, a name under which Je Tsongkhapa used in more secret texts, such as the *Zhu lan sman mchog bdud rtsi'i 'phreng ba.*[20]

Pan chen bLo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, Panchen Je I (1569 - 1662)

2. Pan chen bLo bzang chos rgyan's *thar 'dod de dpon* is a standard text used among later Gelukpa writers. The First Panchen Lama has relied upon direct disciples of Je Tsongkhapa, including Lodros Baspa, for his sources. Many commentaries have been written on this text, for with the teachings of gCod by the First Panchen bLo bzang chos rgyan we see a greater number of Gelukpa gCod practitioners practicing gCod of the Gelugpa tradition.

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[20]in The Collected Works of Je Tsongkhapa, vol. *ka*, pp. 289-314. See pp. 291, 297, 299.

bLo bzang chos kyi nyi ma, Thu'u bkvan III (1737-1802)

3. The great scholar Thu'u kvan's *Zab lam gCod kyi snying po mdor sdus nyams su len tshul (A Concise Instruction of the Very Essence of the Profound gCod)* remains popular even in contemporary times. Thu'ukvan has written numerous works on gCod (see bibliography).

dNgul-chu Dharmabhadra (1772 - 1851)

4. dNgul chu Dharmabhadra's extremely short, one folio text, *gcod sdud pa,* shows in its brevity that the meaning of the text was actually considered to be of vital importance, rather than just the recitation alone. Its brevity implies that if one knows the meaning, one can do the gCod even with just a very few words.

Zong Rinpoche blo bzang rtson 'grus (1904-1984)

5. Finally, the twentieth century *gCod* text *zab lam gcod kyi rnal 'byor ba'i tshogs mchod 'bul tshul nag 'gros su bkod pa,* compiled by the great Ganden Shartse Monastery master of gCod, Zong Rinpoche blo-bzang Tson-'grus, is an example of a gCod meditative ritual in which only the White Offering is performed. We had the opportunity to record this ritual in

Mundgod, Karnataka State, South India, in 1980 at Zong Labrang, Ganden Monastery, when Zong Rinpoche was asked to perform it for a Tibetan family who were residing in Switzerland.

It is our hope that these translations will shed some light on the development of the gCod tradition through the centuries since Machig Labdron's time. There is a huge gCod literature, and the field is a fertile one for further translation and research projects. This work is a small contribution towards the goal of collecting, translating and understanding this important contribution to Mahāyāna Buddhism, the gCod tradition of Machig Labdron.

Zab Lam gCod kyi Khrid Yig

A Commentary on the Profound Path of gCod

by Matibhadra Kīrti bLo-bzang grags-pa'i dpal[1]

I bow down to the feet of the Lord Buddha, Owner of the Teachings, to Āryadeva, the life of the propagation of the Mahāyāna gCod practice, and to the holy Indian (Phadampa Sangye), the Lord of the Attainments. I bow down to the heart emanation of the Great Mother (Prajñāpāramitā), to Machig Labdron, and to all the root and lineage Gurus.

Herein are written the instructions of the profound path of *gCod*, the method to cut the self-grasping, the root of all mistakes.

I and all others have experienced various undesired happenings from beginningless time to the present and have suffering. The root of these mistakes lies in the delusions of grasping to "I" and "mine". Because of this, one should therefore practice this *gCod yoga* which is the profound path of cutting this

[1]Otherwise known as Je Tsongkhapa. See Robert A.F. Thurman, ed. *Life and Teachings of Tsong Khapa,* Dharmasala, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1982 and Thurman, *Tsong Khapa's Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence: Reason and Enlightenment in the Central Philosophy of Tibet,* Princeton, Princeton University, 1984, for details of the life and teachings of this master.

enemy of self-cherishing and self-grasping from the root. This has three parts:

1. explanation of the lineage of transmission,

2. the actual profound commentary of this lineage which has been tranmitted, and

3. the instructions about the teachings which should be kept secret for those who are not fortunate, and instructions to be given for those who are fortunate.

First, the textual lineage explained extensively and secondly, the transmission of the special instructions of the teaching, explained in brief.

First, (the textual lineage explained extensively)

Buddha Śākyamuni, The Regent Maitreya, the Bodhisattva Asanga, the supreme scholar Vasubandhu, Āryadeva, Phadampa, Sönam Lama, Machig Labdron, Tseton Dharma, Khugom Chöseng, etc.

The special instructions has two divisions:

1. transmission of the method lineage and

2. the transmission of the wisdom lineage.

First, Buddha Śākyamuni, Manjusri, Āryadeva, Phadampa, Kyoton Lama, Machig Labdron, Khugom Chöseng, Dölpa zang thal, Gyanag gcer sgom, sang-rgas Rabtön, rtog-ldan-dge-slon, zhen-med-ras pa,

sangs-rgas-ston-pa, mkhas-grub je[1] and so forth.

Secondly, the wisdom lineage: The Great Mother Prajñāpāramitā, Ārya Tara, Sukhasiddhi, Āryadeva, Dampa Sangyä, Sönam Lama, Machig Labdron, Son Gyälwa Dongrub, Jamyang Gönpo, Khugom Chöseng and so forth to the root Guru.

As for the actual instructions which came from that lineage: there are 3: the preliminary, actual and concluding teachings.

First, in order to bring the mindstream towards Dharma, one should meditate on the leisures and endowments of the human state and the difficulty of obtaining this precious human rebirth.

Second, after being brought towards Dharma, in what places and at what time one should practice, and in what way the visualization should be done.

Third, how to examine the characteristics and signs of the scary place to which one has gone.

First, with respect to the time, Son Gyalwa Dongrub asked Yum Chenmo

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[1]This is mkhas-grub chos rje, from whom Je Tsongkhapa received the long lineage of gCod. See Dharmasenghe, *History*, 527ff. for his biography.

Machig Labdron if it is rare that one attains leisures and endowments[1]. In response Machig said, "If you look at all the animals, there are many, and compared to all of them there are but few humans. And when one looks at all the other types of beings, at the hell beings and hungry ghosts, our human life is more rare than a cakravartin king. And if one looks at those beings living in border countries, in which the Buddha's teachings have never flourished, compared to them, a human being who practices Dharma is more rare than the *udambhara* flower."

And just like this, by thinking and meditating on the difficulties of attaining the leisures and endowments and the great meaning of attaining this human form (what one can accomplish with it), one should be enjoined to take the essence. Likewise, there are three factors regarding how one is enjoined to come towards Dharma:

1. Thinking of the certainty that death will come one is enjoined to take the essence.

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[1]from the *Yangtshoms zhu-lan-ma*, said to be answers given by Machig Labdron in response to the questions asked by her son, Gyalwa Dongrub, in *gdams ngag mdzod*, p. 101-115, p. 102.

As the holy Dampa said, "We do not always stay in this world. We have to prepare right now for our long journey to the next life, Dingriwa. Monkeys play happily in the forest not knowing that fire surrounds them at the edge of the forest. Since, there's no bridge over the waters of birth, old age, sickness and death, do you have the boat ready, Dingriwa?"[1]

And Machig said, " Water runs down quickly from a steep mountain. And when a dam breaks, all the water suddenly flows out. When a stream of water is suddenly cut off, there's no more flow of the water. Thus, all phenomena which are impermanent are subject to change."

And Venerable Milarepa said, "Alas, this impermanent life is unstable, and always changing. Thus there's no essence to this samsāra. So we have to search for something with essence."

After thinking about these meanings then one should meditate on them.

2. After that, think about the uncertainty of the time of death, thus being enjoined to practice.

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[1]Phadampa Sangs rgyas, *zhal-gdams ding-ri brgya rtsa-ma*, pp. 3-17, in *Pha-dam-pa sangs rgyas kyi zhal gdams ding ri brgya rtsa ma, rje gung thang-pa'i bslab-bya-mdor-bsdus-ma, rje pha bong kha'i mi-rtag-dran bsul, gong-sa-sku-'phreng-bcu-gsum-pa'ichu-spre-zhal-gdams, jo-bo-rje'i rten-brel 'chi-bslu, shes-rab snying-po*, Dharmasala, Tibetan Cultural Printing Press, n.d., pp. 4-5.

Phadampa, "It's never certain when the demon lord of death will come, therefore we have to be cautious now before death comes, Dingriwa. Last year's beautiful flowers are dried up next year. Don't rely upon this body, Dingriwa."[1]

"On market day, the shoppers come for shopping, but after their business is finished, they depart. Friends are not stable. They will definitely desert you, Dingriwa. That vulture of the mind will definitely fly away some day. What prevents you from flying away right now, Dingriwa?"[2]

And from Phadampa's *Testament*, "Alas, it is certain that death and impermanence come quickly and it is never certain when they come. So how can you hold this life to be permanent?" Thus he said.[3]

And Venerable Milarepa said, "Death and impermanence are like the shade. No matter how much one runs from it, it catches up. There is no pursuer worse than this. I myself also ran from him. It is good if you too run from this death and impermanence."

One should think about these.

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[1]*zhal gdams Ding ri brgya rtsa ma*, p. 6.

[2]ibid., p. 7.

[3]*zhal gdams Ding ri rgya rtsa ma*, p. 6.

3. Thinking about the sufferings of *samsāra*, one is enjoined to practice.

From Dampa Sangye's text called *gcod brul tsho drug pa:* "One is suffering from the harmful illnesses of the body, speech and mind and distracted by the rivers of birth, old age, sickness and death. One is bound by the chains of self grasping and is stuck inside the fence of various sufferings."

One should think deeply about these things that have been said here.

The way to practice the collection of that meaning,

"It is difficult to obtain the leisures and endowments, and even if one does attain them, since they are composed phenomena, they are impermanent and subject to death. And as for this death, its place, time and circumstances are not definite . Even after death, one does not cease to exist, but one definitely takes rebirth.

As for this rebirth, there are two definite places for rebirth, higher and lower. And one has no freedom to choose such a rebirth, rather it is under the power of something else, that is, *karma*. If one takes a lower rebirth, think how much suffering one must undergo there. Imagine yourself, would you be able to bear such suffering if you were faced with such horrible conditions? If you think you would be unable to face such suffering, then you have to look for the causes of such suffering, i.e. the ten non-virtues, which are by nature

unwholesome, as well as the transgressions of the rules (either lay, novice, or fully ordained). One must abandon those transgressions and must seek refuge in the Three Jewels. It is extremely important to exert oneself in the ten virtuous actions.

Phadampa said, "If you slip off and fall down now, it will be extremely difficult to get this human life again, Dingriwa."

Second, after being enjoined to practice Dharma, in what place, at what time and with what visualizations one should practice (gCod).

First, regarding the place, Āryadeva said, "One should meditate one-pointedly in slate mountains and snow mountains, in cemeteries and scary places, in villages, great cities and caves of earth and stone."[1]

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[1]Āryadeva, *Tshigs-bcad chen-mo*, in *gdams ngag mdzod*, Vol. 14, pp. 1-7, p. 4.

And in the 'khrul-gcod text[1]:

"In the places where the great Owner of the earth lives, and at waterfalls with 9,7,5 or three heads. In the terrifying places of the Nāgas of the four lineages, Brahmins, warriors, merchants and sweepers. At solitary trees and at the center of the earth, at boulders shaped like tigers, snakes, birds and swine, at those places dwell the four classes of nyen, so in all of those places one should practice."

"In groves, in snow, in caves of earth, in places where the earth is being torn apart, in meadows shaped like piles of grains, in mountains, rocks shaped like tortoises and spiders, in such places dwell the sa dag, so there one can have a good increase in practice."

"At red rocks like flames or like swords, or in the shape of a monkey face, or like rocks being torn apart, where roads meet, where water breaks on rocks, at such places dwell the *btsan* spirits, so these are good places for the practice."

"At ownerless temples, at temples decorated which blue stripes under the

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[1]Perhaps referring to the *'khrul gCod* text whose authorship is sometimes attributed to Orgyan Rinpoche (Padmasambhava). Dharmasenghe, *History,* p. 549. Or it could be a spelling mistake and this could also be from the *'brul tsho drug pa* by Phadampa. As we have not been able to locate either text, we are not able to identify the passage definitively.

roof, at ownerless monasteries far from villages, in such places dwell the king spirits, so such places are good for the increase of virtue and practice."

"In cemeteries, animal stalls, sites of stupas, door temples, crossings, empty houses, places of asceticism, cremation grounds, there gather a variety of non human spirits. There one should do the practice of gCod in the sphere of Emptiness."

"Since one gets attainments from the contact with these Nāgas, sadags, king spirits, therefore, one should practice in places where they dwell."

So one should go to such scary places.

Second, at what time one should go.

From the text *'khrul gcod*: "One should go in the evening with the darkness or at best without any hesitation about time, and at middling, one should go during the day." Thus, one should go as it says.

Third, how one should visualize when going.

Instantly one generates as Trõsma Nagmo (Khros-ma nag-mo) or other meditational deity, and then emanate from the heart either various beings that dwell in scary places, such as a lion in snow mountain, tiger in the forest, Garuda in lakes and waterfalls or at other bodies of water, a crossed vajra on

roads and plains, or blazing iron in caves and temples or at a stupa, a human corpse in a cemetery, or at all of those places a vajra of meteor metal. One could also visualize that Trosma Nagmo sits at the place and emanates countless Ḍākinīs, who fill all the spaces, outer, inner and intermediate. At whatever places, all the gods and demons are overpowered and pressed down. And there is no exit from any of the places. These are the oral instructions of not letting the small fish rise up, which takes their life essence (overpowering them).

Then, going with the manner of a brave tiger, or with the deep mode of proceeding like a yoginī, or like a slithering black snake, or like the dance of a Ḍākinī. One should proceed thus, thinking of the meaning of refuge and Bodhicitta, which will be explained below, and verbally reciting. If one goes without doing these, then it will be as if the enemy is alerted--either they retreat or they endeavour to harm one. Likewise, the weak gods and demons would flee to another place and the strong ones would make efforts to harm one back. By seizing the life of the scary place, the place is overpowered.

Therefore all beginners should practice this (refuge and Bodhicitta), along with the oral instructions of not letting the small fish rise up.

It would be unsuitable if these were not practiced at scary places.

Third, having gone to those scary places, three means of checking the characteristics of those scary places.

First, checking by means of substances. In that area, if there are precious jewels or endless knots, or lotus and wheel, sit at the centre of those. Sit at the top of umbrellas and banners and at the middle of fish and at the stomach of conch shell.[1]

Second, checking by means of the form. Sit in the mouth or in the claws of lions, tigers, bears and wolves. Sit in the mouth or on the wings of winged creatures, sit on top of frogs and snakes, sit between the horns of yaks and scorpions. If brief, on any form which resembles a living being, one should sit on their most powerful place.

Third: as for indefinite places, sit on the head of one-headed streams; at three headed waterfalls, sit at the place where they join into one, sit at the fault of earthquake places; at the door of temples and animal stalls, at the gate of a fence, at the place where two paths cross, at the curve of a frightening narrow path, at the center of market places, bridges, charnel grounds, and crossroads; at the side of a mountain , and at the base of stupas or solitary trees, in the thinnest place of a thick forests and the thickest place of thin forests, at the base

[1]These are the eight auspicious symbols.

of a scary boulder, etc.. In brief, among those places in sight, sit where you think the place is the most frightening. If you sit there, one's mind can be established in Emptiness and can distinguish between Samsāra and Nirvana. This will help the yogi to attain realizations.

After going to those places, when practicing gCod, one should not provoke or harm the gods and demons living there. One should not send them away, and should not hope for even the slightest attainment from them. However, based on these fearful worldly gods and demons on the outside, fear will arise to one's mind on the inside and by means of establishing this mind (through analysis, reasoning, i.e. understanding the Emptiness of the mind which becomes afraid) which experiences fear on the inner level, all obstacles and unfavorable conditions are transformed into favorable ones; one's fearful mind is not an obstacle. Instead, it helps one. One's object of self grasping is not found on analysis, thereby one's ultimate great aim is fulfilled, i.e. one gets the Mādhyamika view which frees from Samsāra.

Also, on a temporary level, by giving one's body, flesh and blood to the gods and demons, one brings them under contral and gives them a relationship with Dharma. On the ultimate level, the purpose of this practice is to lead all living beings to the bliss of ultimate liberation.

Second, the actual practice has three parts.

1. In the beginning, taking refuge and generating Bodhicitta.

2. In the middle, meditating on the union of method and wisdom.

3. At the end, eliminating interferences and bringing about progress.

I. First. (Taking Refuge and generating Bodhicitta)

Āryadeva says, "From the sphere of Emptiness, take refuge, generate Bodhicitta and make requests."[1]

And Phadampa, "These days, there are many who merely engage in the ten virtuous actions, but still most of these actions serve only as the causes for Samsāra, and this Samsāra is like a prison. The delusions are like poisonous snakes; negativities are like the poisonous *tsan-dug* plant, being served respectfully and having honor and riches are the nets which trap one in Samsāra. Material possessions are just essenceless things; hating one's enemy is like an illness; love for one's friends is like chains; this body is like a magician's illusion; this life is like a water bubble; our breath is like the fog."

"So therefore, in order to be liberated from those Samsaric places, one

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[1]*Tshigs-bcad chen-mo*, in *gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 14, p. 6.

should meditate on the meaning of the Buddha's teachings of the Prajñāpāramitā. This very pure path (understanding of Emptiness) is also not easy to generate, so one should first purify the mind with refuge, Bodhicitta, requests and so forth."

"If one does not have refuge, then one has not entered the Buddhist path. If one does not generate Bodhicitta, then one has not entered the Mahāyāna Great Vehicle. If one does not make requests to the Gurus, then one does not receive blessings, thereby one does not develop virtue in one's mindstream. So one needs these three."

So the meaning of all these will be explained below (after the explanation of requests) and as for explaining all the other preliminaries, there are four:

1. the teaching on taking refuge in order to attain the state of enlightened Buddha

2. the teaching on Bodhicitta to attain the Great Vehicle

3. the teaching of the 'Stream of Nectar from the Letter Ah' in order to purify all negativities and obscurations

4. the teaching of the mandala offering of one's own body in order to accumulate the two collections (of merit and wisdom).

First, what are the reasons for one to take refuge, who are the objects of refuge, what are the measurements of having taken refuge, how to take refuge, advice on refuge, benefits of refuge, essence of refuge, knowing well all the particulars of causal and resultant refuge, the qualities of the 3 Jewels, how to generate faith and compassion not merely in word by recalling all the faults of Samsāra.

Then one recites:

"I and all living beings as extensive as the sky, especially those living beings who are intent on doing harm to me due to the debts I owe them from beginnningless time, and the owners of the place and the local gods, all of us take refuge in the Guru."

Say this at least 100 times, since it is so very important.

Phadampa said, " One should direct one's mind, heart and chest to the Three Jewels, and then the blessings come by themselves, Oh Dingriwa."

Second, the commentary of Bodhicitta.

One should see that all the owners of the land who dwell here in this area as well as those beings who mainly do harm, actually desire only happiness. But since they collect only causes for suffering, they are subject to various unbearable mental and physical sufferings. And, one should realize that since

all these beings change form from one life to the next, we don't recognize them, but nevertheless it is ascertainable from one's analysis that all of them are one's mothers and fathers.

Since they have all shown us great kindness by protecting us from various harms in the past and by benefitting us in various ways, now, in order to pay back their kindness we need to develop a mind which cherishes them. Induced by these two kinds of mind, one develops a very strong compassion which remains constantly. In this way compassion is generated.

Especially, if hindrances by harming spirits occur, one should direct one's mind towards those spirits and think that oneself has also taken birth many times in forms similar to theirs, and if one continues to do the same negative actions, will be forced to take a similar life form in the future. And still one is pursued by negativities and is totally crazed by the delusions. Continuing to harm one's own son is very shameful. So in this way one should generate even stronger compassion and loving kindness.

It is not sufficient simply to utter the word "compassion", rather one should think, 'May all living beings be free from suffering. I myself will liberate all suffering beings and I myself will place all beings in the state of happiness. I myself need to do this. But my present situation is such that I

cannot do this. Even those Bodhisattvas and Śrāvakas do not have the full means to fulfill the purpose of others. Only the Buddhas have that capacity.'

Seeing that, one should aspire to attain the complete state of Enlightenment in order to gain that ability, and should generate this aspiration again and again very strongly, and should make this promise in one's mind many times. One also should recite these words:

"For the purpose of all living beings and for those land owners, place owners, harmdoers intent on doing harm to me out of the debts I owe them from beginningless time, I will very quickly reach the state of complete enlightenment. For this purpose I will practice the yoga of the profound gCod."

And then, do the four immeasurables:

"May all living beings be endowed with happiness and the causes for happiness. How wonderful if they would be endowed with happiness and the causes of happiness. I myself will lead them to that happiness.

May all living beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering. How wonderful if they would be free from suffering and the causes of suffering. I myself will free them from suffering and the causes of suffering.

May all living beings be endowed with the happiness that is completely

free from suffering. How wonderful if they would be endowed with this happiness free of suffering. I myself will lead them to this happiness free of suffering.

May all living beings abide in the state of equanimity which is free from attachment to those one holds close, and aversion to those distant ones. How wonderful if all living beings could abide in this equanimity. I myself will lead them to this state of equanimity."

Each immeasurable has three aspects: the prayer, aspiration and extraordinary thought. Recite those four immeasurables three times each while thinking about the meaning very deeply.

Then, regarding the way to train in Bodhicitta through the oral instructions of exchanging self for others. Seeing that all sufferings and undesirable things come to one because of self-cherishing and all happiness and excellence comes from cherishing others, I give all my merit seeds to others and take the suffering of all beings onto myself.

Then, exhaling from the nostrils, send out one's own happiness and virtue to all beings, to the harmdoers and others just as if they were being given an antidote for an illness or eliminating darkness with a lamp. All of them are

endowed with happiness and excellence of body, abode, enjoyments, and all become fortunate beings who practice Dharma.

Then, when inhaling, one takes in all the sufferings which are the fruits of delusions and karma of those beings, which cause their mindstreams to have all kinds of sufferings and undesired happenings, like cutting away hair[1]. One breathes in the air and it enters into one's heart, like dropping a bomb on one's self-cherishing. Do this 21 or 100 times. Then, verbally recite, "May all negativities and obscurations ripen on me and may all my virtue ripen on others."

And from the words of Dharmarakshita (in *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*), "May all my virtue be given to others, like crows which are given medicine after eating poison. And may all others' suffering be taken by me, just like the peacock, who gets an even better color after eating poison. May all the delusions be transformed into supporters for my attainment of enlightenment."

Saying thus, repeating these words many times. Thus, having taken others'

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[1]This simile of cutting away hair is referring to the way that the shavings of hair all come off when one is shaving a head of a monk or nun, leaving the head completely free of hair. In this case, all sufferings should be visualized as being completely cut away, leaving the beings completely free of suffering (Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, 1990).

suffering, take also the sufferings which are collected by one's own mindstream. Then, take upon oneself right now one's own sufferings which the future life will bring, as well as all the rest of the suffering of one's present life which will come during the years that are left. Take next month's suffering this month, take tomorrows' suffering today.

Geshe Chekawa said, "One should do this practice of taking and giving together with the breathing repeatedly (according to the oral instructions, first take, then give)."

Then, just like breathing into a bag and having it get bigger and bigger, the body gets bigger and bigger, and then recite PHAT. The body at once falls down and becomes a huge ocean of nectar, which pleases the objects of refuge, and those to whom one is karmically indebted and the local gods. Think that the Ārya beings are pleased and all 6 realms of living beings are satisfied with the enjoyments of all beings.

Since these are the teachings of the Masters Nāgārjuna, Śāntideva, and Machig, all the visualizations of this Dharma teaching are mainly concerned with teaching how to train the mind in Bodhicitta. So those who enjoy practicing gCod should mainly train in Bodhicitta. Those respected ordained ones who have abandoned moral discipline and those Bodhisattvas without

Bodhicitta and those Tantrikas who are not keeping their vows and commitments, they are robbers and thieves who plunder the Buddha's teachings.

Third, the commentary of the stream of nectar from the letter Ah, for purifying obscuration.

In the space above one's crown, visualize a white letter Ah as white as the moon. While reciting Ah, nectar flows from the letter Ah, entering the crown of one's head, causing all the negativities, downfalls, obscurations and stains collected from beginningless time to exit from the pores and orifices. Visualize that one's body becomes clear and stainless like crystal, and completely filled with wisdom nectar.

After reciting thus, one's mind rises up from the soles of one's feet, gradually collecting and dissolving into the letter Ah at the crown. The Ah also gets smaller and smaller, and finally it also dissolves into Emptiness which is like the stainless space. Place the mind on this. This meditation is now also without base (*rten-med*, like the Ah in space), as the mind has left the body. The ownerless body is left on the ground and from this time the body and mind have separated, so they cease having a relationship with each other. Therefore the mind should not look for its abiding place in the body and vice versa. One

should regard the body without self-cherishing and self-grasping, just like rocks and earth.[1]

One should place the mind in the spacelike meditation on Emptiness, just like the holy Indian Dampa has said.

Fourth, the commentary of the mandala offering of one's body, which is the way to accumulate merit and wisdom.

One sends out the consciousness from the body with the recitation of Phat, the skin of one's body becoming the precious base, in the center of which the trunk of the body becomes Mount Meru, the four limbs the four continents, the east *Lupapo*, south *Dzambuling*, west *Palangchö*, north *Draminyen*, the auxiliary limbs, in the east, *Lü-dang-lü- phags*, south, *Ngayab-dang-nga-yab-shan*, in the west, *Gyo-dan-dang-lam-chok-dro*, in the North, *Dra-mi-nyen* and *Dra-mi-nyen-gyi-dra*. The head becomes the palace of the victorious one, on top of Mount Meru. Adorning the top of the palace, the heart becomes the wish-fulfilling jewel which is the source of all desires and needs. The two eyes are the sun and the moon.

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[1]Rocks and earth have no owner, so too one should think of the body as ownerless.

Thinking thus, say Phat and, visualize these aggregates as precious objects, and in brief, say, 'I offer this precious mandala of the yogi myself, which is arranged here and contains all excellent qualities, to all the kind root and lineage Gurus, assembly of yidams, precious objects of refuge, ḍākas, Ḍākinīs, and protectors. Please accept this offering completely and bless all living beings and myself to quickly reach the completely enlightened state.' Recite seven or more times, offering again and again.

2. **Second, meditation on the unification of method and wisdom.**

1) By making requests to the Gurus and deities, receiving the attainments of body, speech and mind, and separating one's body and mind through the blessing of the sky opener

2) getting to know the mind as the space

3) collecting merit by means of the vast method,

4) collecting wisdom by means of the profound wisdom.

First By making requests to the Gurus and deities, receiving the attainments of body, speech and mind, and separating one's body and mind through the blessings of the sky opener.

In the space in front of oneself is a huge lotus tree in the center of which is a thousand petaled lotus, on which is a moon cushion. On top of this sits the Great Mother Prajñāpāramitā, orange in color, one face and four arms, the first two are in the meditation position and the second right holds a golden vajra, the second left holds a volume of the Prajñāpāramitā, adorned with silk and jeweled ornaments and seated in the vajra posture. Above her on a lotus and moon seat sits the Owner of the Teachings, Buddha Śākyamuni, in Nirmānakāya aspect, the color of purified gold. Wearing orange monk robes, to the right of him is Maitreya, to the left Atiśa. On the right of Mother Prajñāpāramitā is Ārya Tārā, behind her is Manjuśrī, to her left are Sukhasiddhī and Dampa Sangye. Above them are all the textual lineage Gurus of the extensive teachings and together with them all the lineage gurus of method and Wisdom. And at the heart of Yum Chenmo, all the deities of the assembly of meditational deities (*yidams*).

Below her, at the root of the lotus tree are the *ḍākas*, *Ḍākinīs* and protectors, like clouds covering the sky. Then the wisdom beings are invited. With a mind full of faith, recite:

"I prostrate respectfully with body, speech and mind to the Gurus and assembly of deities,

I make offerings, both actual and imagined,

I confess before you all the negativities I've committed,

I rejoice greatly in the roots of your merits,

Please turn the wheel of Dharma in order to benefit all living beings,

Please remain in existence for the purpose of all living beings as long as samsāra remains.

I dedicate all the merit I have made for the sake of complete Enlightenment."

Thus reciting the seven-limbed prayer from the text *brul tsho drug pa* or any other suitable seven-limbed prayer.

Then having again offered the mandala of the body as earlier, visualize that all around oneself are the ones to whom one is karmically indebted, and all those intent on harming one, and together make these requests, with one voice:

"I make requests to the Blessed One, Great Mother Prajñāpāramitā, in the Palace of Ogmin pure land.

I request you , Blessed One, please bless me.

I request the Gurus, Machig Labdron, Great Mother Prajñāpāramitā, bless me to remember the uncertainty of the time of death,

Bless me to wander in frightening and isolated places,

Bless me to transform the aggregates into food,

Bless me to take all unfavorable conditions as supports,

Bless me to completely get rid of self-grasping from its very roots,

Bless me to train in love and compassion,

Bless me to completely cut off the object to be cut,

Bless me to mentally abandon this life,

Bless me to take illnesses as supports for progress,

Bless me to destroy the mistaken dualistic grasping,

Bless me to accomplish the purpose of myself and others."

And likewise with the following verses:

I make requests to the Blessed Buddha Śākyamuni at Vulture's Peak, I request you, Blessed One, please bestow your blessings.

I request the Blessed Lord Manjusri in the five-peaked mountain in China, please bestow your blessings.

I request the Blessed Ārya Tara in the Pure Land of Yulakö, please bless me.

I request the Blessed One Sukhasiddhī in the rainbow light palace, please bless me.

I request the Blessed one Āryadeva in the grass hut in India, please bless me.

I request the Blessed one Dampa Sangye in Dingri's Langkhor in La stod, please bestow your blessings.

I request the Blessed one Sonam Lama in the Gangwar temple of gYa', please bestow your blessings.

I request the Blessed one Machig Labdron in the supreme abode Zangri Kharmar, please bestow your blessings.

I request the Blessed one Gyalwa Dondrup in the Laqnglung Monastery of Yechung, please bestow your blessings.

I requeset the Blessed one Khugom Choseng, in the Khu monastery of Nyemmo, please bestow your blessings.

I request the Blessed One Dolpa zans thal, in the Chagra monastery of Lungmas, please bestow your blessings.

I request the Blessed Meditator Gyanag Cherbu, in the special place of Chuwo Mountain, please bestow your blessings.

I request the Blessed One, Sangye Rabton, in the Sewas Monastery of Radrong, please bestow your blessings.

I request the Blessed one, Togden Gelong, on the mountainside of

Zalmo, please bestow your blessings.

I request the Blessed one, Zhenme Raspa, in the Munkhang Hall of Kharag, please bestow your blessings.

I request the Blessed one Sangye Tonpa, in the great monastery of Rigong, please bestow your blessings.

I request the Blessed one, Khedrub Chos Je, in Samling Monastery of Nyangto, please bestow your blessings.

I request the Blessed Root Guru, on the sun and moon on the crown of my head, please bestow your blessings.

I request the blessed assembly of the deities in the Dharma palace of the heart, please bestow your blessings.

I request the blessed Lord Protectors and their entourage, in the cemeteries of Silwa Tsal, please bestow your blessings.

I request the blessed Dharma brothers and sisters, in the Initiation Hall of the pure commitments, please bestow your blessings.

Please bless me to accomplish the two purposes of myself and others."

Recite this, while making very strong requests mentally, until tears come to your eyes.

Then, from the forehead of Machig Labdron comes a white colored

goddess, in essence the body of the Gurus and Yidams but in the aspect of a goddess, white in color, adorned with bone ornaments, playing the damaru with the right hand, and holding a skullcup filled with nectar in the left hand, with a khatvanga in the crook of the left elbow. She approaches the Great Mother Yum Chenmo and sees her face, then turns, faces oneself, and dances and plays the damaru as before. Then, with one pointed respect, make this prayer:

"I make requests to the body of the Guru, Please bestow the blessings of the body of the Great Mother Prajñāpāramitā."

Thus requesting very strongly. From the forehead of this goddess come many letters OM of white light. They dissolve into one's forehead, filling one's entire body with white light, purifying all negativities and obscurations of the body, granting the blessings of the body. Think strongly that one has received the vase initiation.

Again from the throat of Machig comes the essence of the speech of the Gurus and Yidams, as a red goddess like before. She enters the throat of the Great Mother as earlier, and one says,

"I make requests to the speech of the Gurus, bestow the blessings of the speech of the Great Mother."

Thus requesting, from the throat of that goddess come many letters Ah

of red light which dissolve into one's throat. The body is filled with red light, purifying all the negativities and obscurations of the speech. Visualize that one has received the blessings of the speech and the secret initiation.

Again, from the heart of Machig comes the essence of all the Gurus and Yidams as a blue goddess, who enters the heart of the Great Mother, and one says, "I request the mind of the Gurus, bestow the blessings of the mind of the Great Mother Prajñāpāramitā."

Thus requesting, from the heart of the goddess come many HUM syllables in blue light. These enter one's heart, filling the body with blue light, purifying the stains and obscurations of the mind, granting the blessings of the mind and the wisdom initiation. Think thus.

Again, respectfully make this request to all three goddesses, "I make requests to the body, speech and mind of the Gurus, bestow the blessings of the body, speech, and mind of the Great Mother."

Thus requesting, from the forehead, throat and heart of the three goddesses come white, red and blue light simultaneously, dissolving into one's three places, filling the body completely with white, red and blue light, purifying the stains and obscurations committed with the three doors (body, speech and mind). Think that one has been granted the accomplishments of body, speech,

mind and activities and as well as the four initiations.

Then, Buddha Śākyamuni and the others all dissolve into the Great Mother, and the Great Mother, as the collection of all the Three Jewels of refuge, dissolve into one's crown and one rests in nondual meditation (one's mind, the Great Mother Prajñāpāramitā and Emptiness become the same, nondual).

Second, separating the body and mind by means of the sky opener and introduction to seeing the mind as space. There are three parts.

The first is abandoning attraction to the body.

From the Sūtras:

"One should think of the body as an enemy. Think that the body is dirty. Think of it as subject to destruction and impermanent."

As said in the Sūtras, "When the elements get upset illnesses arise, many undesirable things occur. This is the enemy, and the body is unclean, as it is full of pus, blood, excrement, and urine. As it is quickly destroyed, by means of its impermanence, give up all attraction for it."

Second, separating mind and body.

Then, standing up straight with feet together, one should think of the

essence of the mind as being under the soles of the two feet, the size of a bean seed. Inhale and push down the upper winds a bit and draw up the lower winds, joining them at the navel in a vase breath. Hold the four limbs tightly (so the breath stays at the navel). The two drops at the soles of the feet gradually rise, joining at the secret place. Then, saying Phat, they again rise. Just like a skylight in a roof opening up, the crown opening opens and the mind shoots out like a shooting star and enters the space, becoming white light. Again say PHAT. This circle of white light becomes more and more extensive, pervading the space. Meditate on this.

Third: introducing the mind to spacelike meditation, which is free from all extremes.

One's mind, in the appearance of white light, should gradually disappear into the stainless emptiness of space, which has no center and no end, just like a cloud disappears in the sky. All dual appearances disappear, and one should meditate on Emptiness which is free from dual appearances and free of the extremes of elaboration for as long as possible.

Machig says:

"Whatever appears to the mind as objects by means of the six organs, one should not pay the least attention to them (one should forget about this appearance). Then one is freed (from the wrong conception of true existence, so one sees Emptiness). So when meditating on Emptiness, if one does not look at anything which arises as truly existent, then one is freed (from the signs of true existence. If one knows that the Mind (*rigpa*) also does not inherently exist, and if one has no fear of directly perceiving this, then one is freed.[1]

And Āryadeva also said:

"If one is free of grasper and grasped (subject and object to which one grasps -- like a form and the consciousness which perceives that form), then one arrives at the meaning of Dharmadhātu. At that time, one should not analyze the body and mind, but should only look at Emptiness, which pervades all of space. The mind (subject) should also pervade the object (Emptiness) in the vast, expansive, pervasive, all pervasive great yoga." [2]

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[1]Machig Labdron, *bka'tshoms chenmo*, in *gdams ngag mdzod*, vol 14. Here, the *rigpa* is the wisdom (*ye-shes)* which sees the meaning of Emptiness. If one knows that the Wisdom which sees Emptiness is also empty, and has no doubt about this, i.e., if one establishes oneself without a doubt in this direct perception of Emptiness of the Mind, then one is freed.

[2]*Tshigs bcad chen mo*, in *gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 14, p. 4.

Relying on these quotes and others, a vast amount has been said about the way to meditate on this. These instructions come from the Prajñāpāramitā, and are known as the mental stabilization known as the crown-like concentration and the spacelike meditation.

2.3. *Third, collecting merit by relying on the extensive merit.*

1. By means of separating the body, one does the gCod tranference of consciousness.

2. Based on the white and red offering, one accumulates the two collections.

First (2.3.1):

(2.3.1.1) transferring the consciounessness (*rnam shes*) to the deity and second, (2.3.1.2) transferring the mind (*rigpa*) to the sphere of Emptiness.

(2.3.1.1) First, (transferring the consciousness to the deity).

If the yogi experiences certain signs of death relating to problems with the winds and channels, etc., one should perform means to revert this such as long life practices and other means to revert these. If this does not work, one should give away one's own wealth and possessions for wholesome purposes without having any feeling of attachment towards them. If one has

attachment for one's friends, parents, possessions, etc. one will not be able to do the transference of consciousness. And before death comes, one needs to do this practice. For it is said that if the body is seized by a very great illness, then one cannot do this transference practice. Therefore, when the time of death arrives, those who are not very fiercely ill should do this transference of consciousness.

For that, visualize in the space above one's head the Goddess Prajñāpāramitā, Buddha Śākyamuni or Maitreya, etc., or whichever deity that one wishes to visualize. Then, light emanates from the deity's heart and a tube of light, like a bamboo reed, comes from the deity's heart to the crown of one's head. Think that this opens the central channel at the crown of the head. One's consciousness, in the form of two drops the size of bean seeds rises up from the soles of one's feet. Reaching the secret place the two drops become one.

Reciting Phat, it again rises, reaching the heart center inside the central channel. At that time, one's consciousness is visualized either as a drop or as the syllable HUM in the central channel at the heart. It looks up and sees the heart center of the deity, and sees where the two meet (the place where one's own central channel meets the light tube at the crown of the head). At that moment, one should not have the least amount of attachment and should develop

strong aspiration and respect. Recite, "Please grant me the ability to transfer my consciousness to the Pure Land and to your heart. Please take me right now. Thus making earnest requests."

Then, verbally reciting Phat, one's consciousness in the form of a drop or as the syllable HUM starts to rise through the central channel, and shoots out of the central channel at the crown, just like an arrow being shot out. It goes through the tube of light that comes from the heart of the deity, and fully integrates with the mind of the deity. Thus the two become inseparable.

Think that one's mind and the heart of the deity mix and become one, and remain one-pointedly on this meditation. Either one can transfer the consciousness to the Guru or to Machig, the method is the same.

Also, since at the time of death we need to do this very same practice, we should train just like this daily. If ones does not train now, when the elements are in good condition, then, it will be difficult later to get results.

(2.3.1.2) Second, transferring the mind (*rigpa*) into the Dharmadhātu:

Āryadeva says, "The supreme means (of freeing from Samsāra) is mixing the mind *(rigpa)* and the Sphere of Emptiness. At the time when the mind *(rigpa)* and Sphere mix, all objects and signs (of true existence) are obstructed.

Holding to that visualization, one is awakened, one abides in the meaning of the Dharmadhātu free of grasper and grasped."[1]

So one should do as Āryadeva says here.

Then, making requests for whatever is desired, one's consciousness in the form of two drops under the soles of the feet, rise to the secret region, becoming one, then it rises to the navel, then the heart, the throat, and then to the crown channel.

Then, recite Phat. At the crown channel the central channel opens and the mind (rigpa) shoot out like an arrow. It goes out into the sphere of space and gets bigger and bigger. All of space is pervaded by Emptiness. All Emptiness is pervaded by the the mind. Rest in that meditation. This is known as the transference into the Dharmakāya.

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[1] *Tshigs-bcad chen-mo, gdams ngag mdzod,* vol. 14, p.4.

(2.3.2) Second, collecting merit by relying on the white and red offerings. From the *tshoms,* (*Yangtshoms*) Machig is asked:

"If the body gets an illness, etc., what shall one do?"

Machig answered, "Go to a frightening place, all you yogis. Cut up your body and offer it. Bury your wrong conceptions in the sphere of Emptiness. Moreover, one should do this again and again."[1]

Regarding the meaning of what Machig said, there are three parts:

1. relying on the white offering, one should collect merit and purify negativities,

2. relying on the red offering, one should collect merit and purify negativities,

3. relying on the variegated offering of whatever one desires, one should collect merit and purify negativities.

First, visualizing the Supreme Objects of refuge, meditate on faith, and second, visualizing all living beings, meditate on compassion.

Especially, from the bottom of one's heart one should think, "In previous times, this body of mine was of no benefit; it was purposeless. But now, this time I will make it an offering to the Guru and Three Jewels. I will give this

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[1]*Yang tshoms,* in *gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 14, p. 109.

body to the harmdoers, those to whom I am karmically indebted, to all those father and mother living beings, thereby for the moment, removing their sufferings of hunger and thirst, and ultimately, removing their sufferings of Samsāra and lower rebirth. I will lead them to the state of complete enlightenment."

Reciting Phat, think that one's mind, which is inseparable from Venerable Phagmo Nagmo[1], leaves the crown of the deity and enters the space. Then, from the heart center comes a yoginī emanation, holding a curved knife. She cuts the skull off one's old body with her knife and places it in front on top of a tripod of human heads. This becomes as vast as the billion world systems. Scooping up all the flesh and blood[2], she places it inside the skullcup and from below, the wind blows and the fire blazes. The syllables OM AH HUM dissolve into light and they boil, turning into excellent wisdom nectar endowed

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[1]Phagmo Nagmo refers to the black goddess Tröma Nagmo (*khros-ma Nag-mo*), the Wrathful Black Goddess, who is the special meditational deity of gCod. Here it seems that Je Tsongkhapa expects that the special initiation of Trosma Nagmo would have been received by the practitioner in addition to the *Nam mkha' sgo byed* initation (Sky Opener Initiation).

[2]The Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche explains that this ritual cutting and tranforming of one's own flesh and blood into divine nectar symbolizes that one's present status as a defiled being full of delusions has the potential of being transformed into a totally undefiled, pure state of divine enlightenment (personal communication, Switzerland, 1990).

with excellent color, smell and power. Visualize thus.

In front of this sit all the Gurus of the lineages and all the Gurus, Yidams, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Pratyekabuddhas, Śrāvakas, Ḍākas, Ḍākinīs, and Dharmapālas. One's parents as the main ones, along with all living beings, also sit there.

Again, countless yoginī emanations holding skullcups and jeweled vessels offer this nectar[1] to the Gurus, Yidams, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas. They are all pleased, and are filled with uncontaminated bliss and satisfied. Then make requests that one's temporary and ultimate wishes be fulfilled.

Second: Offering to the Ḍākas, Ḍākinīs, Dharmapālas, pray that all obstacles are eliminated and all favorable conditions come about.

Third: Giving mainly to one's parents and then to all living beings, think that they are all contented and satisfied and that one has repaid the kindness that they have shown to oneself since beginningless time.

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[1]Again it must be stressed that although upon first observance it seems that this is a gory ritual of self-immolation, in terms of Tantra it is strictly in accordance with tantric theory of taking the fruit onto the path. One offers the resultant state of enlightenment, depicted here as this wisdom nectar, to the higher guests, who are understandably pleased that the practitioner is taking up the path of Tantra, taking the result onto the path.

Fourth: Giving to all those to whom one is karmically indebted and to the harmdoers, think that they are all satisfied and that everything one owes them has been paid back; their grudges are all dissolved; all their harmful and bad thoughts are pacified, and their minds are filled with love and compassion.

Then, at the end, the three heads turn into OM AH HUM; the skull dissolves into light and becomes AH. They all dissolve, along with all the living beings, into the Gurus and Yidams, who then all dissolve into oneself.

One may also meditate on the profound completion stage or any other virtuous practice.

Second, Relying on the red offering, collecting merit and purifying negativities.

Generate faith towards the Jewels and generate Bodhicitta, then separate the body and mind as previously explained. Then, one's mind sends forth a yoginī emanation holding a curved knife, who cuts one's body from the forehead, and peels off the skin. Spreading it out, it becomes as vast as the billion world systems. On top of this is a mountain of one's flesh, an ocean of blood and piles of bones. The heart, fat, and inner organs and so forth, pervade the billion world systems. Think thus.

Then, from one's mind emanate countless *karma yoginī* emanations or countless light rays, which go to all living beings generally to all those flesh- and blood-loving gods and demons and especially to all those gods and demons who dwell in that scary place, and all those who are intent on harming one, those interferers and interferences, and all those gods and demons who appear in existence, such as

the 80,000 classes of gegs, the 15 great interferences of children, and moreover, the goddess of illness, the goddess of epidemics, the eight classes of gods, *mamos* and cannibals etc. All those who do harm to oneself are gathered. Then, one gives all of one's flesh and blood which has been blessed so that it becomes like the flesh and blood of a seven-birth Brahmin[1].

This feast is offered to them all. They are are all happy and eat all the flesh, drink all the blood, noisily chew all the bones, enjoy the heart, fat, inner organs,etc, until not anything, even the size of a sesame seed is left. They are contented, satisfied and pleased. Their bodies are endowed with radiance. By eating the flesh of the seven-birth Brahmin they are liberated from the hell realms and *samsāra*. The unexcelled bliss of liberation and godly paradise are

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[1]According to the tantras, a seven-birth Brahmin is one who has been born as a Brahmin for 7 consecutive lifetimes. If one partakes of this type of flesh, one is freed from rebirth in the hell realms.)

generated in their mindstreams; all their harmful and bad thoughts are pacified, and they become endowed with beneficent and peaceful minds, and endowed with Bodhicitta. One should have a stable and lengthy concentration on this.

Verbally, recite thus:

"I offer my body, together with its outer skin and flesh, the inner organs with the heart, the two elements with the channels and veins, the marrow, bones, brains, the organs with their fluids, the head and bodily hair, nails, the life, breath, and complexion. In brief, I offer my entire body to all you harmdoers. I give it to you. I dedicate it to you. Those of you who want my flesh, eat it. Those who want my blood, drink my blood. Likewise, take anything that you would enjoy, the outer or inner body, the bones, skin, limbs, heart, fat, brains,and so forth. Take whatever you would like."

One should recite in this way. Moreover, one should do this meditation of gCod every day in the evening, at dawn, at sun rise and at sun set in four sessions.

Again, say, "From today on, to tomorrow and every day after that, separate my mind and body (I am in your hands, i.e. kill me); send me all your illnesses come to me, especially, plague me with leprosy, naga diseases and all disturbances of the interferers. Direct your mouth to me (devour me). Send all

bad omens and sign to me, who wants to be happy (out of my self cherishing attitude). Since I am giving this body to all living beings in general and especally to those kind parents and to all the holy Spiritual Guides as a ransom, may all the karmic indebtedness and bad karma of all living beings ripen upon me and may no harm come to the body and life of any living being, but may my body be the substitute for all of them. And right now, any of those who want to, eat this body. If you have time, cook it and eat, or if you are in a hurry, take it raw." Say this again and again.

If the situation becomes very violent, then do the following. Visualize a wisdom fire, like the fire at the end of an aeon, in the center of which is warm flesh and blood. In the middle of this all the interferers and interferences are collected without any power of their own. They have been collected from the ten directions and gathered together by the countless wrathful deities which have emanated from one's heart. Imagine that these interferences are thrown into the fire, where they are compelled to eat and drink. Then meditate on them all as gods and deities, who then dissolve into oneself. After that, engage in completion stage meditation or other virtuous activities.

At that time, think, 'in order to cut the view of "I" and "mine", I will take those undesirable things of all beings, and in order to purify the karmic

indebtedness and bad karma, I will give my body. Then, especially to lead all those evil beings to the state of complete Enlightenment I will never be separated from the skillful means of the practice of thinking that all bad circumstances lead me to virtue; illnesses are the broom to purify my negativities, suffering is the boost for my view of Emptiness; demons and interferences are the emanations of the Buddha" (they help one), as it is said.'

'Whatever illness or bad circumstances arise, may I be able to take them as the path and whatever happiness or sufferings arise, may I experience them as the same taste.[1] If I do not do this, it is not possible to purify the object which is to be cut.'

There are specific reasons why one should abandon the cherishing attitude toward one's body. Through the power of cherishing the aggregates, one generates self-grasping and self-cherishing, under the power of which one collects karma and again is born again and again in this cyclic existence. But, by giving this body, without holding back, to other beings, one reverts the cherishing of the aggregates and moreover, by that means, if one can cut the

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[1]This is a reference to *Ro-snyom*, or 'of equal taste' and is a reference to all phenomena having the 'same taste' of Emptiness.

grasping to the aggregates, then one can press down the direct appearance of self-cherishing and thereby does not collect negative actions. Therefore, one is not stuck in Samsāra. By holding down these negative actions, although it is only a momentary undermining of this attitude (of self-cherishing), it does not completely uproot the self-grasping together with its seeds. For this one needs the wisdom which realizes selflessness. However, it is the method to help reduce it.

Therefore, all the training of the Mahāyāna teaching is contained in the teaching of mental training . Also all the Mahāyāna teaching are collected in the teachings of gCod.

So, if one wants to become an excellent practitioner of gCod, one needs to develop compassion and loving kindness so that one really holds all beings dear to oneself.

First, one has to develop compassion and loving kindness so that one is really holding all beings dear, and second, one should develop the view of selflessness, which is the actual means of cutting the very root of existence.

On the other hand, those who presume themselves to be a yogi without any of those qualities, having a consciousness as stupid as a sheep, and conduct as bad as dogs and swine, who are engaged in practices which include

whatever comes to one's mind, such as digging up scary ground, or turning frightening stones, cutting down scary trees, stirring scary waters, running naked, shouting in empty valleys, upsetting gods and demons, or burning something unpleasant to gods and demons,[1] do not have even the slightest smell of being a gCod practitioner.[2]

The intelligent one should know about these details.

Third, purifying negativities and collecting merit through the practice of giving whatever is desired.

After saying PHAT, and separating one's mind and body, transform the body into whatever is desired by any living being, like a wish fulfilling jewel: food for those who want food, clothing for those desiring clothes, abodes for those desiring abodes. In brief, give whatever anyone wants, together with all

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[1]For example, burning meat is said to be extremely unpleasant to the Nāgas.(Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, 1990).

[2]This refers to the various types of unusual practices a so-called 'gCod' practitioner may be observed practicing. Here Je Tsongkhapa warns that just doing these practices as a kind of provocation or show of one's strength and power (for example, digging up scary ground as a means for the person to show that he/she is not afraid of the spirits and landowners of that place), is not truly a gCod practice at all.

the accessories. One should think again and again that all the guests, whoever appears in *samsāra* and beyond *samsāra*, are pleased and satisfied, and thereby are purified of all obscurations and complete the collection of merit, reaching the state of Enlightenment.

Then recite verbally:

"I go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Spiritual Community until I reach complete Enlightenment. Through the merit I collect by practicing giving and the other perfections, may I reach the state of complete Enlightenment for the sake of all living beings."

And, "By the force of this extensive giving, may I become enlightened (a self-made Buddha) for the sake of all beings. And by my generosity may I liberate the multitudes of beings who were not liberated by the past Buddhas."

And, "May everything that is needed and desired (all kinds of material possessions and facilities) by all beings who are poor and impoverished be placed in front of those beings."

Thus reciting many prayers related to the perfection of giving.

Then, after praying, one should think, 'All my previous lives have been purposeless and have only served as the cause of suffering. Now this time, I want to have a purposeful existence. This existence I have found now is very

good.' Thus meditate on joy and rejoicing.

Then, regarding the transference of consciousness.

The practice of transference of consciousness and the practices of accumulation of merit such as the white and red offerings, and so forth, should be done either seven, twenty-one or a hundred times, or according to one's own age. One may do the practices any number of times, according to one's health and elements, as it is explained.

Fourth --Relying on the profound wisdom, the collection of wisdom:

Āryadeva says, "As for the meaning of the nondual Prajñāpāramitā: If one is not free from the extremes of virtue, nonvirtue, abandonment and taking up, and free from hopes and fear, even though one does accumulate a collection of merit, that merit will not bring about freedom in this life. So we must not meditate on even an atom of objects and nonobjects, of all white and black dharmas, as conventionally existent, but meditate solely on their emptiness (see only their ultimate reality). However, if one doesn't rely on Method (Bodhicitta) one will not be able to directly perceive Emptiness. For example, if one doesn't first prepare the field, the fruits will not ripen and there will not be a harvest."[1]

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[1]*Tshigs bcad chenmo, gdams ngag mdzod,* vol. 14, p. 3-4.

One should first prepare the foundation -- the three abidings[1]. And one should hold to the natural mind.

When asked, "How should we meditate on Emptiness?"

Machig answered: If one does not have any signs of conceptions, any artificiality in the mind, then one is established in the sphere of nonobservability --(objectlessness) i.e. Emptiness."[2]

Then, when asked how would one act when going to a scary place, Machig answered:

"The body should be like an ownerless corpse, and the mind should be as the clear sky, without end or center. It should be like the flame on a motionless candle, pure, without any wind blowing on it, and clear and

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[1]According to Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, this refers to preparing the body, winds and the mind, by placing the body in the 7-pointed posture of Vairocana, clearing the winds (preparing the channels), and analyzing the mind. One should put the Buddha's teachings of Emptiness on top of the foundation of a well-prepared body, winds and mind.

[2]Machig Labdron, *Yang tshoms*, in *gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 14, p. 104. Lodrö Bäpa (blo gros bas pa) has given detailed explanation regarding this verse, stating that some people have taken it to mean that one does not have to think at all, and rather should just have a blank mind. This is incorrect, explains Lodrö Bäpa, and is not at all the meaning which Machig intended. See snar thang pa grags pa dpal (Lodrö Bäpa), *gCod kyi gdams ngag phul byung gser gyi phreng ba*, pp. 151-180, in *gCod tshogs*, p. 161.

unagitated like the ocean without waves, like very calm water without any movement."[1]

So the body should be in the seven-pointed position of Vairocana before meditating on Emptiness. As for the voice, the winds should be purified, and the breath should be very natural, not too strong nor too weak. Inhalation and exhalation should be very natural. As for the requirements for the mind, first one must look for the object of meditation. First one needs to get an image of true existence. In order for this to arise, one must first see that image *(don-spyi)* of true existence and then look for it.[2]

So first one must get the image of true existence which is to be removed. This depends on the appearance to one's mind of an image of true existence. That appearance of true existence appears again and again to the inborn mind[3]. For example, when "I" appears to this innate mind, it does not appear in a way

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[1] *Yang tshoms*, p. 107.

[2] Here Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche explains the example of analyzing the horns of a rabbit. First one has to have an image of the horns of a rabbit. Without this one cannot find out that there ARE no horns of a rabbit. If there ARE horns, one has to tell what kind, what size, if they DO exist. If they are there, one must describe them. If they are not there, one should let go of that image (personal communication, 1990).

[3] "The inborn mind" refers to the mind which takes birth from beginningless time.

which is only designated; it does not appear merely as a name, but it appears in an independent way, from its own side, as if it is the real meaning. That kind of appearance is given names such as 'the appearance of inherent existence'[1] or 'the appearance as truly existent', etc.. Such names have been explained by Nāgārjuna, etc., and are found in the scholarly literature.

Now, one must investigate to see if that appearance is there or not.

First, one has to see that these appearances are there in the inborn mind. If that appearance of "I" actually exists as it appears, in that case, then it must be established that this I must exist either as the same as the aggregates or as different from the aggregates.

If we say that it is the same as the aggregates, in that case, there is no difference between myself and the aggregates, so "I" and the aggregates become one; there is no way to separate the two. If "I" exist as different from the aggregates, then "I" and the aggregates have no connection and "I" must have another meaning. If it is like that, since there are these two faults, then it is definite that there is no inherently existent "I" like it appears. Then one will

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[1]As explained by Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, this 'true existence' has been given many names. We grasp to this appearance. So, if we see the horns of a rabbit, even if they do not exist, we think they DO exist because we see them (personal communication, 1990).

think that the kind of "I" which appears to one's mind is not established. If this understanding appears to one's mind, we say that one has found the object of meditation[1]. First one has to do stabilization meditation.

The way to do this: if one thinks that the "I" which appears to the innate mind is not established, that kind of state of mind should be free of interruptions by any other mental factors and one should not allow any other object to appear to the mind. Only hold to the essence of selflessness as long as possible[2], remaining in the understanding of the non-affirming negative. Try to remain in that state as long possible, without mental sinking and agitation. Remain in meditation free of disturbance.[3] (Do not let any other object arise to the mind, like truly existent object.)

While remaining in that state, without disturbances of any kind, keep in mind that if you lower your mind too much, the result will be sinking and

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[1]If one strongly feel that there is no inherently existent "I", then that is when one has found the object of meditation (*migs-rten*) for the meditation on selflessness of persons. But still one cannot automatically meditate on it. One needs to have first mental stabilization meditation, without which one cannot meditate on the object, i.e. selflessness of persons (Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, 1990).

[2]This is placement meditation.

[3]This is the explanation of the way to meditate on the calm abiding which has selflessness as it object (*bdag med la dmigs pa'i zhi gnas*).

dullness, and if you heighten your mind too much, mental wandering and excitement will occur. So one must avoid these two extremes by placing one's mind on the object of meditation in such a way that these two extremes are avoided.

Machig says, "Apply some force, but don't squeeze too much. Keep the mind loose enough, that is where you should place the mind -- in between, not too tight nor too loose."[1]

So, by remaining in that one-pointed equipoise, free from sinking and excitement, one will attain the "attention of equipoise." In that state, if one is able to induce the bliss of the pliancy of the body and mind, one is said to have achieved the mental stabilization (*śamatha*) with Emptiness as object. Again and again, by doing that meditation, without losing the ability to remain in *samadhi*, using penetrative insight at the same time, which is the analysis itself, one thereby gains more ability to remain in that state, and thus one does not lose the ability to stay in that state. At the same time, penetrative insight induces pliancy of the body. Then it is said that one achieves the penetrative

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[1]Machig Labdron, *Thun mong gyi le lag brgyas* in *gdams ngag mdzod*, Vol. 14, p. 147. Here Machig is reminding that one should have memory (*tran pa)* and awareness (*shes shing*), but not too much. It should not be too tight nor too loose.

insight with Emptiness as object. With that, one should know how to meditate on selflessness of phenomena. Those are the ways to meditate on Emptiness during the period of meditative equipoise.

The way to do the post-meditation meditation on Emptiness:

Remaining in the space-like meditation, the Dharmadhātu, and then arising from that state and entering the post-meditation state, one should seek what still is there to be seen, and then one sees that persons and phenomena are (only appearing) as names and designations. Nevertheless, those designated objects are able to perform actions such as coming and going, and so forth. Even though these appear to one's mind, still they are empty. That emptiness is like an illusion, empty yet still appearing. So appearances are also like illusions.

If I were to give more details about this here it would involve too much writing, so I will not present more here. If you want to read more, one should look in other sources.[1]

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[1]Commentaries on the Mādhyamika View, such as Je Tsongkhapa's *dbu ma gongs pa rab sal, gsung 'bum*, vol. *ma*.

Third, the way to remove the interferences and to bring about progress.

1) To remove obstacles and interferences

2) To bring about favorable conditions for progress.

(First, to remove obstacles and interferences:)

1. the way to remove the obstacles of mistaken conceptions.

2. The way to remove the obstacle of illness which involves the disturbance of the elements

3. The way to remove the obstacles of one's disturbed, mistaken enemy, that is, the mindstream.

First (removing the obstacle of mistaken conceptions): if one is suffering from leprosy caused by Nāgas and earthowners, one should visualize that from one's head and lower part of the body come two black snakes, with iron-like manes. On the right of oneself is a blue snake, to the left, a yellow snake, in front, a white frog, behind, a black frog, and above and below, in all ten directions are countless number of garudas in three colors, white, red and blue, as well as a large gathering of wild animals. One's whole body is filled with Nāgas and earth spirits, like vultures hovering over a corpse and eating up one's body completely, without leaving anything behind, whereby one should

mix one's consciousness with space, leaving that consciousness in the state without conceptions.

Or again, going to a haunted place where nagas and demons dwell, one should think that all the nagas and spirits which harm one are in one's own heart. At the same time, gather all the gods and demons of that place, and visualize that they fill one's body completely. Again, mix the consciousness with the space. After this, one's head splits, and turns into a countless number of huge golden heads. The spirits who harms one's body are like an ants' nest being crushed by a hail storm. This is the visualization known as the golden boulder which cures leprosy.

For those who are attacked by illness caused by Rāhula: one should imagine that Black Rāhula with nine heads, the eight great planets and twenty-eight stars, the four attendants of Rāhula and all the accompanying entourage of gods are all gathered together and eat one's body and illness completely. Visualize Rāhula with nine heads inside one's body, where all the other classes of planets also dwell, and imagine that one's body is engulfed by flames. Then recite *Phat*, mixing your consciousness again with space. Your consciousness is then mixed with the space, leaving only the body, and the body together with the spirits inside it, are lifted up into the sky by the wind, thrown onto a golden

base and instantly burned. This visualization should be repeated again and again.

Should one's body become like a nest for spirits, then one should visualize in one's own body a palace for those spirits. Invite them from their respective places, bring them into the palace which you have created within your own body, and offer your flesh etc. as enjoyments. Without any self-cherishing, one should ask these spirits not to leave, but to remain there. Then the consciousness should be shot into the space, and the mind should be placed in the state without elaboration.

The way to imprison the interferers. They all gather as if they are gathering for a festival, filling one's body. As soon as the body is filled, the door closes, and inside a great fire begins to burn, until all the spirits are burned completely. One's body becomes like an old temple which then crumbles. All the interferers are destroyed, and like ash destroyed by the wind, all disappear into Emptiness. Again, one should place the consciousness into Space and remain in that state of birthless Emptiness.

Or, one should imagine, "I have never existed truly from the very beginning, nor have the spirits, so how can there even exist one who is being harmed and one who harms."

That is one of the supreme methods.

Phadampa says, "If space meets space, there's no discrimination (such as close or distant). Also, with Emptiness (when Emptiness meets Emptiness) there's neither help nor harm."

If someone tries to harm one, either through black magic or spells, first there is a method to transform these harmdoers into your supporters. Wherever one finds oneself, one should invite the regional harming spirits, and should offer one's own house as a palace.

Offer your body, flesh and blood as the very enjoyments and property of that harmdoer, saying, "You have become one of my masters for the attainment of enlightment. You should stay here forever. I am offering you my own life, flesh and blood. "

Saying that, mix your consciousness with space, and let your mind remain in space. This pacifies the negative intentions of the harmdoers and turns them into your own protectors.

The way to transform bad omens and change them into good fortune:

If one receives certain signs in dreams, without thinking too much about them, one should take them as incentives for better practice (thinking, probably I am not practicing well) and as an antidote for laziness. From whatever

direction that harm comes, one should invite that harmful being, and let him do whatever he wants with one's body, and the mind should remain in a state of Emptiness.

At best, one should go to that being's place, and sit right in or by his iron triangle[1] and his torma stand.

Or, in the middle case, go to the place where the spirits dwell or at the very least, face the direction of the harmful being and repeat the meditation (the practice of gCod --) over and over again, whereby the harms can be redirected toward that being.

Second, the way to remove the obstacles of disturbed elements which cause illness. If one is suffering from heat illness, this is because the element of water has become weak so that the element of fire is very strong. There is

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[1]Here the iron triangle (*hom khung*) refers to a type of ritual done by practitioners of Bon who perform rituals for destructive purposes. This was common practice in Tibet at the time of Machig Labdron and Je Tsongkhapa). In other words, according to the Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, one should not be afraid and try to fight back, but rather should go right to the person or being who is trying to harm one, and offer on's body right at that very spot. Sometimes, some people would perform harmful spells using this *hom-khung* and *torma*, and a figure made out of dought to represent the victim. In this case, the practitioner goes in person to the place where the spell is being done, so the harmful person would not have to use the dough effigy. (personal communication, 1989).

a special meditation which revitalizes the element of water. In the center of the heart, on a moon disc, visualize the *arura tsambala* fruit, which has a cooling effect, like a crystal sphere, sending forth a stream of cooling water. The body is filled with this cool water, and from the pores of the body comes dew. At the end, separate mind from the body and reamain in the state of Emptiness.

If one is suffering from cold, it is a sign of losing the power of the fire element, whereby the power of the water element becomes strong. So one should visualize fire in the secret region on a sun disc. Visualize a red syllable RAM streaming forth rays of heat. At the beginning the flames are very small and fine, and extremely hot, and finally become stronger and bigger. Finally the body is completely filled with flames. Again, separate the mind from the body and remain in the state of emptiness without elaboration.

Third, the actual means of getting rid of interferences of one's own mistaken mindstream. There are also two other visualizations. First (the actual means of getting rid of interferences of one's own mistaken mindstream) has three parts:

1. The way to use the enemy as an object for the practice of patience and taking that enemy as the path.

No matter what that enemy does, whether killing, cutting, stealing or

robbing, think that 'he comes only to collect those debts which I myself owe him'. One should think, 'this is very good; it is the fruit of my own previous unwholesome actions for which I am responsible. So the enemy should do whatever he like.' Thinking that way, one should talk to the enemy in such a manner that the enemy is made to feel happy. At that moment, send your consciousness into space and leave your mind in a state without any conceptions.

Thus one tames one's own continuum from the inside. This helps to tame the mindstream of others on the outside. Thus, attachment and hatred cease in their own place. The enemy becomes one's own sponsor and support.

2. By meditating on the enemy as one's spiritual guide, take the enemy as the path.

Whatever the enemy does to oneself, whatever harm, one should not retaliate with hatred, but should consider this enemy to be one's own spiritual guide. Thus one is given the incentive to practice compassion. Thinking this way brings about the appearance of the enemy as the spiritual guide. Then one should leave one's consciousness in the state without any conceptions.

3. By meditating on the enemy as the Dharmadhātu, take the enemy as the path.

First, one should think, since "I" do not exist, there should be no attachment. In the middle, since the enemy does not exist there should be no hatred. Finally, since nothing exists one should conclude that there is no such thing as birth, leaving one's mind in Emptiness without elaboration.

Second, regarding the other visualizations, there are two:

1. the way to destroy

2. the way to help

First, in order to practice gCod, one has to offer all benefit and victory to others, and take all losses and defeat onto oneself. This is essential for the practice of gCod.

Nevertheless, it may occur at one time that if one does not do the practice of destruction then there will arise certain very evil beings who do great harm to the teachings of Buddha in general. So if there should arise some form of attack, inciting others to fight, and so forth, then one should make a *linga* (form) of that one who is causing the harm, and write on the form the

name and family name of the harmdoer[1], and do the practice of calling him into the *linga*. This should be done very attentively.

Then, one should do the gCod practice in a haunted place, and as soon as the signs occur showing that one has brought the guests of the ritual under control and they cannot get away, then one should speak to that gathering of gods and demons saying, "Either take me or take this".[2] Recite this and think deeply.

After that, recite *Phat*, and send your consciousness into space. That consciousness turns into meteor metal that lands exactly on the heart center of the harmful being in the *linga*, whose consciousness is in the form of the red syllable *HRĪ*, having the appearance of a butter lamp. This *HRĪ* absorbs into one's own consciousness in the form of the meteor, dissolving therein and instantly becomes even more radiant. This brings about a separation of the consciousness and body of that being. Visualize that you have now brought his

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[1]This is generally written on a specially prepared paper and put in the heart of the linga. The Tibetan text states 'ming-dus', an orthographic error, which would read 'name and time' referring to the harmdoer. It should read 'ming-rus', meaning 'name and family' (Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, 1989).

[2]This means, 'Either take me, the gCodpa, or take this *linga* which is before you.'

consciousness into a pure land. Do that 108 times during every session, and conclude with the meditation on Emptiness.

2. The way to help.

First, to bring about rainfall, one should go to a place where wrathful Nāgas and *nyen* spirits dwell. Recite the *Sūtra of the Great Cloud*, do prayers to the Three Jewels, and at the beginning, make a white *torma* offering followed by an offering of water. Do the prayers *"Recalling the power of Truth"* followed by giving an order to the Nāgas saying that they should bring rainfall to that place.

Then, reciting *Phat*, send up your own consciousness in the form of the syllable *Phat* which is emanating fire, into the space above. Leaving it in the space, visualize that your body falls on the ground and dissembles, the skin becoming the ground for the Nāgas, the outer frame becoming a palace for them, and all the inner substances such as blood and pus, etc. becoming an ocean of milk. The heart becomes a jewel, and the body precious jewels, islands of flowers, all the excellent enjoyments of the nagas. Offerings these to the Nāgas, they are very pleased and satisfied. From the pores of all those Nāgas comes a rain of nectar. One should visualize that the region where the rainfall is desired is completely pervaded by this nectar rain.

If this method does not bring rain, one should procure the blood and brains of a leper or the lower undergarment of a widow,[1] and seal them tightly into a bamboo tube. This should then be wound with the hairs of a wild yak, and should be set out, according to the instructions[2] at a frightening spring. Then orders should be given to the Nāgas.

Recite *Phat*, and one's consciousness, again in the form of a meteor, goes into the space, the body again dissembling. The skin becomes the ground, the body the palace filled with flesh, blood and inner substances. The Nāgas should be visualized as being inside the palace. Instantly one's own consciousness, in the form of the meteor, descends, causing the blood to boil

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[1]These substances are used here to provoke the Nāgas to listen to the requests for rain and bring rainfall. It is said that generally Nāgas lie around, and it is rather difficult to get them to listen. Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro explains that this rough course of action is similar to when a parent first tries gentle means to make their children do something, and when the children just will not listen, then the parents have to get rough with them. Here, the Nāgas find such substances very offensive, so if they are exposed to such things, they will be incited to action, as happens here in the ritual, by placing these in a bamboo tube and placed in a spring where the Nāgas dwell (personal communication, 1989).

[2]It is important that the instructions of the tradition are followed carefully, so that the setting out of such substances does not hurt the nagas. This is not meant to be harmful against the Nāgas, explains Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, but rather incites them to bring rain (personal communication, 1989).

and the flesh to cook and to start burning. The smoke and burning smell causes a great noise, filling the entire region. At that time, all the doors of the palace are closed; thus the Nāgas have nowhere to go. This causes the Nāgas inside the palace to let forth an uncontrollable rainfall of blood from their orifices and pores. Think in this way and conclude with the meditation on Emptiness. This is only to be done as a last resort, when no rains can be brought, and should not be tried at the onset.[1]

Again, in the case of hailstorms, one should go to the place where it is hailing very heavily, and visualize that one is under this hail and first meditate on Emptiness. Secondly, with divine pride of the deity, recite this mantra (just after the mantra of one's meditational deity) *'Serwa Serche dang chä pa marāya hum phat'*, meaning 'kill the hailstorm along with the senders of the hailstorm'. Perform the threatening gesture, blow in that direction and make the gesture in the direction of the hailstorm; throw mustard seed mixed with ashes (from a cremation ground) and wave a knife in the hailstorm's direction. This will without a doubt revert the hailstorm.

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[1]This is not to be done unless other measures fail, as, although it does not hurt the Nāgas if performed properly, it does cause them to be afraid (and thus they bring rain.) Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, 1990.

Second: Bringing about favorable circumstances to bring about more progress on the path. There are several means by which to accomplish this.

1. Direct prayers to the Guru and the Three Jewels.

2. Meditate on compassion for mother sentient beings and especially for the harmdoers.

3. In the middle, analyze the favorable and unfavorable circumstances.

The first: Even though one is practicing in haunted places and doing one's best, still, if one does not make any progress, either this is due to the fact that there is degeneration of the commitment between oneself and one's Guru, or because one's accumulation of unwholesome actions is too strong and the wholesome accumulation too weak.

If that is the case, then for the time being, one should put aside all other practices and should only meditate on the profound Guru Yoga, which is the ultimate way to get blessings. This has two aspects: accumulation of merit, (wholesome actions) and purification of negativities. (First, accumulation of merit.) One should perform the seven-limbed prayer and offering of the mandala, direct prayers which are free of wrong view, and develop faith and confidence. Then when the blessings begin to come, they will definitely bring

progress in one's realization.

Second: One should develop a mind of equanimity which does not discriminate between any sentient beings in general and in particular, those who harm one and those to whom one owes debts such as local gods who sometimes harm and sometimes help. One should not consider them as friends or as enemies. After achieving that state of equanimity, direct the thoughts toward the positive direction. Meditate on compassion and loving kindness, since one has received help from all these beings. This brings about a spontaneous generation of a mind which wishes that all beings are free from suffering and endowed with happiness. Then, after that there the extraordinary thought to being all living beings to the state of Buddhahood by oneself arises spontaneously. This effects a special progress for developing Bodhicitta, which is the very root of the teachings of the great vehicle.

Third: (Analyze the favorable and unfavorable circumstances). Whatever unwished for circumstances come to oneself, whether pleasure or suffering, high or low, good or bad, happy or unhappy, one should look at these as the very fruit of one's own bad actions in previous times. Whatever good and desired

things which come about should be seen as the kindness of the Guru and Three Jewels. One should meditate in that way. One should realize that just as someone who helps and supports is seen as a favorable circumstance of this lifetime, if there is no harm coming to oneself, then there is no way to develop patience. And without patience one cannot reach Enlightenment. And in the next lifetimes as well, all the harms serve as favorable conditions for the attainment of Enlightenment. Therefore, one should obstruct the arisal of hatred and attachment and should examine where happiness and suffering come from in the first place, then, where they dwell in the middle period, and at the end, where they go.

One should also analyze the one who experiences this happiness and suffering. Then, upon looking for that person one will not be not able to find him. But nevertheless, one experiences happiness and suffering, so one should consider these as experiences in a dream. Think that the ability to help and harm exist merely as designations and therefore one should not attach so much importance to them. Thinking in this way one will be able to bring about the wisdom which realizes selflessness, which actually cuts the very root of existence.

Second, first, at the beginning, the signs and occurences, then, in the middle, the way in which indications arise, and at the end, making dedication and prayers, and then, holding firmly to the view of Emptiness, going to other places.

First: (the signs and occurences:)

Āryadeva: "By meditating on the nondual Prajñāpāramitā, which worldly gods and demons cannot endure, there come a variety of occurences either in reality or in dreams. So whatever occurences arise, in the best case they should be placed in the state of nonduality. In the middle case, one should specially meditate on those occurences, and at the least, one should analyze those occurences, followed by the experience of separating body and mind. Then, one should go to a haunted place, and if one again experiences such occurences, one should separate consciousness from the body, whereby the body becomes like a stone. In this way no harm could occur to that body, and the consciousness is like invisible space. Therefore who could harm you? So thinking in that way, leave one's consciousness in the sphere of the Dharmadhātu, without anxiety or fear. Think that the gods and demons have taken one's body away, then one should sit motionless, and whatever conceptions that arise in one's

mind are demons which arise from one's own mind."[1]

Here Āryadeva describes three things:

1. the way these occurences of gods and demons in haunted places occur

2. the way in which the magical occurences of gods and demons caused by the ones to whom we are karmically indebted occur

3. the signs and occurences of sufferings, illnesses and wrong conceptions caused by delusions occur.

First, either in reality or in visions, one may be eaten by wild animals such as lions, tigers, or burned in fire or carried by water or falling off a steep mountain, or crushed in a cave, or by falling boulders, earthquakes, one may be called by name again and again, the body may shiver and the mind become unclear, one may tremble and sweat; these also could occur within one's dreams.

Second, regarding the way the occurences which are caused by Nāgas arise: One dreams of springs, meadows, snakes, frogs, tadpoles, etc.; one sleeps deeply and has an unhappy mind.

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[1]*Tshigs bcad chen mo,* in *Peking Tangyur*, vol. 146, p. 172. Also in *gdams ngag mdzod,* vol. 14, pp. 5-6, however the version which is quotes here is like that in the Tangyur.

Regarding the *gnyan* spirits: One dreams of water horse, ox, wild animals, etc., may get pains in the joints which can become very intense, or pains in the upper back, the mind may become abnormal, one may be quite argumentative.

Regarding the king spirits: one dreams of statues, stupas, masks, lions, monks, red or pink nosed monkeys, flies, rotten meat, white or red dogs.

Third. There may occur a sudden collecting of the elements, and unhappy heart; one may become sad for no reason, may be unable to be alone, may have the wish to constantly be on the go, may become angrily excited, feel sad, or a sudden arising of delusions or arisal of fears or frights.

Second: Regarding the measurements and their arisal:

Āryadeva: "The occurences cease in their own places; one is able to bring the gods above under one's own pledge, and to overpower the Nāgas below. All the Nāgas execute their alloted deeds; all the gods in their respective places give one aid. All the Nāgas become as one's own servants: the Guru, Yidams, Ḍākinīs and Dharmapālas will consider one as their own child. Having overcome the obstructible demons, there appearances as enemies will never arise. Having overcome the nonobstructible demon, one will be able to

bring all the male and female *yaksas* under one's own pledge and one becomes victorious over the force of the delusions. So a great number of advantages will occur."[1]

Regarding the meaning of that, there are three:

1. the way the measurements of gods and demons in haunted places occur

2. the way in which measurements of the harming spirits and those to whom one is karmically indebted occur, and

3. the way the measurements of delusions, wrong conceptions, illnesses and suffering occur.

First. The measurement of having brought gods and demons under one's own pledge is that they come to offer one prostrations and circumambulation, or come respectfully to receive instructions on Dharma or to take refuge, or to generate Bodhicitta. The measurement of having brought them under one's power is that they come to offer their life mantras and execute all of one's orders.

Second. From one's body, frogs, tadpoles, spiders, scorpions snakes, insects, and germs of various kinds leave one's body. This is a measurement

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[1]*Tshigs bcad chen mo*, *gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 14, pp. 6-7.

that the interferers have departed.

Third. Pus, blood, vomiting unclean substances and emptying the intestines, having all these substances dropping out of one's body is a measurement that all the illnesses have departed. Seeing the sun and moon rising, bathing, climbing up, going up a ladder on the roof of a house, going about naked without emabarrassment, collecting a variety of colored flowers, these are measurements that one's illnesses and interferences are pacified and there is a thinning out of defilements and obscurations.

Third. (The way the measurements of delusions, wrong conceptions, illnesses and suffering occur.)

Feeling that all the delusions have gone, including the self-grasping, and that the delusions are powerless in the face of the antidotes which one applies, that whatever happens, be it physical sufferings and pains, or whatever circumstances one faces, good or bad, since these become favorable circumstances for developing method and wisdom in one's practice they are like putting oil on a burning fire. They automatically become like friends and supports for one's virtuous actions. Even the unfavorable situations become incentives for one's own practice. One develops compassion, faith and

renunciation. These are all signs, measurements that wrong conceptions and defilements are thinning out.

Also, generally speaking there many of these may occur.

First, there could be violent occurences, but all of a sudden they may start to show an expression of respect. These are known as measurements which are like indications.

Or, first they may begin with very respectful expressions, and then may turn into rough occurences, which are unpleasant. These are indications which are like measurements.[1]

Or, first they are rough and then, instantly, by applying antidotes, they are made to show respect to oneself. These are simultaneous occurences of indications and measurements. Also, there could be certain arising of measurements caused by non-human spirits, who want to interfere with one's practice. So one should not be content that such measurements occur once or twice; rather they should occur again and again.

[1]Machig writes in the *Namshä Chenmo* (p. 292) that the occurences last only a short while for the best practioner, for the medium practioner, longer, for the lowest level of practitioner, one may continue experiencing occurences for the whole life time, without developing into measurements. This development depends on the level of the practitioner and the quality of his/her practice.

It is also possible that some of the non-human spirits are only able to show certain indications and are unable to show measurements. And it is also possible that some are unable to bear the fact that one is practicing Dharma well, and so are unable to show either measurements or indications. So one needs to have very stable visualization.

In the case that some of the gods and demons are too powerful, and one's own ability (concentration) is too weak, so that one must apply a special method, known as *pok-chok* or *change*. For this, first take refuge and generate Bodhicitta, especially directing your mind to those spirits and directing a special compassion in order to bring that spirit to enlightenment. Think, "I am going to offer my body." (Think this again and again.)

Then out of Emptiness, one arises as the Lady Tröma Nagmo or any other wrathful meditational deity, sitting in the midst of a wisdom fire on a sun disc. One is surrounded by many wrathful male and female deities, and from one's own heart center the wrathful male and female deities emanate and start to catch those spirits, who are in wrathful animal forms, using lassos, hooks, and iron chains to bind them. Thus they are completely without freedom, and they are burned in the fire of wisdom. Their consciousness is transferred to the Lady Tröma Nagmo. Then the deities start to eat them up. Think thus.

The consciousness of that being is mixed with oneself as the meditational deity (*yidam*). Then, all the surrounding deities collect back into oneself and one also dissolves into Emptiness and remains in the profound visualization of the completion state.

The visualization of this "Change" should not be done by those whoses pledges are not pure or who do not have stability in generation and completion state, or who still have a strong grasping attitude[1].

Third: doing the practice of dedication and prayers and then, the way to go to another place.

As soon as the signs of measurement are complete, one should withdraw the visualization of overpowering.

The way to conclude the practice which one has been doing for several days. Visualize the gods and demons whom one has had under one's power (during the past few days) and offer one's own body, etc. Then, dedicate whatever virtue that one has collected through the practice of gathering and

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[1]At this time one tries to mix the consciousness of these interferences with oneself and therefore it is a powerful practice and only to be done by advanced practitioners (Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, 1990).

holding the gods and demons and offering them one's body, towards reaching complete Enlightenment. One should also make prayers.

Then, taking either earth or stone or wood from that scary place, one should write on it either the syllable HUM or HRĪ. Then, one should call the fierce gods and demons from among that gathering of gods and demons, and make them dissolve into that object. Thus, they are unable to go where they want. Take this with you wherever you go and continue as before (in other places). Then, just as they occured before, indications (*slong*) and measurements will continue to take place.[1]

Then, if you are leaving the next morning, in the last session of the evening before, at sunset, one should make *torma* offerings to the local gods. Tell them that you are going to recite some things more, and tell them that they should give their help and support. When it is time to depart, one should withdraw the protective wheel and the pile of stones, wood, etc. that you had placed there. No objects that you have used should be left on that spot such as

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[1]This practice of calling the fiercest gods and demons into the stone, etc. and having the gCodpa take it along to the next place is to ensure that one will continue to have frightening experiences at the next place of practice, so that one will continue to make progress. The Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche relates that here it must be remembered that one needs these demons for the practice; one needs to have frightening experiences in order to maximize one's meditation (personal communication, 1990).

handkerchief, tea, etc.[1]

At the beginning (when leaving) make 21 steps towards an unfavorable direction (opposite from where one wants to go). Then, take your shoes off and turn them around 180 degrees, then put them on again and start waking towards the positive direction.[2]

Then, when you are on the way and arrive at crossroads or dangerous narrow paths, or at a pass, or a narrow path, there one should draw a crossed

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[1]The reason for being careful not to leave anything behind at the practice place is, according to the Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, is that if one leaves something at that place, it gives the feeling of being attached to that place and that we have to go back for it. And as the gCod practitioner is trying to get out of Samsāra, it is not good to leave something behind that will give a kind of dependent-arising that one has to come back to that place. So, if one should lose something, one should give up all attachment to that lost object at once (personal communication, 1990).

[2]This practice is done in order to confuse the spirits at the next place. One does not want to walk ahead boldly, making a great commotion and showing that one is heading towards one's next destination to practice gCod. If one does so, it is like alerting the enemy, as Machig says. If you go in the opposite direction from where you want to go, this confuses the demons at the scary place. They don't realize you are coming to them and they are relaxed. Also by wearing one's shoes backwards (this was relatively simple to do with Tibetan boots, as they were large at the ankle and relatively shapeless) it gives the impression that one is actually going in the opposite direction. (Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, 1990). There are also methods of proceeding such as like a snake, like a dakini, etc. See *Thar 'dod de dpon* in part 3 of this work and Phabongkha, *sgyu lus tshogs su sngo ba, Chod Cutting Off the Truly-Existent 'I'*, trans. Ven. Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche, London, Wisdom Publications, 1983, pp. 6-7.

vajra and generate that into a protection wheel surrounded by fire. But one should never generate a deity into that (because it is on the road). Then, one should keep silent, without talking, and remain in virtuous, wholesome practice and should continue on without turning back. As soon as you arrive at the desired place, spend the first few days also in wholesome practice.

Third: The way to keep it secret from those who are not fortunate for the practice and how to propagate these teaching for the fortunate.

(From Phadampa Sangye's) *zhal gdams bdud rtsi thig pa*: "Those who have wrong views, who do not keep their commitments properly and do not engage in wholesome practice, who are not honest with one's Guru, who have high esteem for themselves and are only interested in the affairs of this life, and abandon the interests of the next life, who praise themselves and criticize others, who deceive the lay people, who use means to conceal one's own faults and try to make people see qualities about themselves that they do not have, who rely on those means, abandoning compassion and loving kindness for all those appearing and existing gods and demons, who engage in unworthy actions such as tearing down and cutting down trees, breaking up rocks and digging up slate with strong, fierce effort, who proclaim themselves to be a gCod

practitioner when in fact they are like a butchers and *raksas*, and are finally destined to fall in the Vajra hell, if these instructions are shown to those persons who do such things, it is against the principles of Magcig and her sons. Therefore it is only to be transmitted to single disciples, not even to two or three."

Phadampa said this, so this practice should be kept hidden. Those who are doing the practice properly, with the motivation to attain the state of Buddhahood, and especially those who wish to do this particular practice, they should be taught this teaching without holding back, without avarice. They should be taught extensively and the teachings should be propagated."

At the time of the practice of these instructions on gCod, one must keep in mind that there are 4 x 8 = 32 points.[1] They are:

1. The four cherishings
2. The four essentials
3. The four special instructions
4. The four structures
5. The four pledges

[1]These are from Phadampa Sangye's text, *Phat chos rin chen 'phreng ba,* in *gCod tshogs kyi lag len sogs,* pp. 546-549.

6. The four demons

7. The four strayings

8. The four mistakes

1. The four cherishings

1. Cherishing, respecting and honoring one's Guru as the Buddha.

2. Cherishing the instructions that one has received from the Guru, without making mistakes.

3. Cherishing the confidence having no fear of birth or death.[1]

4. Cherishing the enthusiasm and perseverance which leaves no room for laziness in the practice.

[1]Because one has very strong Dharma practice, one would not be afraid of death and subsequent rebirth. (Ven. Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, 1990).

2. The four essentials

1. Essential of the place: One should practice in a frightening, isolated place.

2. The essential of the body: One should abandon the four root downfalls commited physically.[1]

3. The essential of the voice: One should take up the practice of singing beautiful melodies.

4. The essential of the mind: One should destroy or pacify wrong conceptions.

3. The four special instructions

1. The special instructions of having unceasing compassion and loving kindness.

2. The special instructions of not discriminating between gods and demons.

3. The special instructions of not having any cherishing and grasping towards one's illusion-like aggregates.

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[1]These are killing, stealing, telling serious lies and sexual misconduct.

4. The special instructions of never being separated from the meaning of the Emptiness of the clear light mind.

4. The four structures

1. The structure that generates disgust towards samsāra.

2. The structure of not being distracted from the meaning of selflessness.

3. The structure of not being afraid of illnesses and magical manifestations and occurences.

4. The structure of rejoicing in the practice of giving one's body and enjoyments.

5. The four pledges

1. Pledging not to beat demons.

2. Pledging not to use the mantra Phat in wrathful ways.

3. Pledging to meditate continuously on the four immeasurables.

4. Pledging to dedicate seven days of every month for meditation.

6. The four demons

    1. The obstructible demons of humans, gods, and demons.[1]

    2. The unobstructible demons of karma and delusions.

    3. The demon of joy.

    4. The demon of arrogant self-grasping.[2]

7. The four strayings

    1. One's practice of gCod straying to the ordinary level.[3]

    2. Straying to practicing carelessly or thoughtlessly.

    3. Straying to using gCod as common prayer practice or soothsaying.[4]

    4. Straying to the path of using gCod as protection from demons.

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[1]These are the demons which come about through contact with human beings, gods, spirits, or, more broadly speaking, external object.

[2]All appearances which come to us are mistaken appearance which come from this self-grasping, therefore Machig says that all demons are contained within this demon of arrogant or proud self-grasping.

[3]This refer to one practicing gCod with interest in this life, for example wanting to obtain food, lodging, fame, etc.

[4]The Tibetan term *(mo-sman)* refers to using gCod as a means to help fulfill people's temporary aims, such as performing prayers for health, wealth, business problems, etc., or using it as a kind of divination where one tries to get advice or ideas from demons, etc.

8. The four places where one might fall

1. Falling into the mistakes of crazy gCod, acting very great and proud, which will lead one to be reborn as a cannibal.

2. Falling into deluded, wrathful actions, leading one to be born as a hell being.

3. Falling to the view of eternalism, by having the view of appearances as truly existent.

4. Falling into the mistake of nihilism, grasping Emptiness as nothingness.

Thus Phadampa says, "Therefore, one should get rid of those obstacles and apply these essential points. If one takes up this path, it will definitely bring about the inevitable results."

Here I must say this:

Having studied the gCod literature extensively, although one may have done a lot of teaching, debating and writing, if one does not tame one's own continuum, but is simply content with a scholarly, literal reading of the text,

having studied about Dharma but not doing the practice, what is the use of studying Sūtra and Tantra?

Not having cleared the doubts by extensive hearing, and not having ascertained certainty in the very pure thought, even not knowing the terms *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*, but just having achieved certain experiences in the fields of breath yoga for happiness and warmth of the body -- there are such meditators who consider themselves to be great *mahāsiddhas*. They still need to rely on qualified masters to clear their inner and outer doubts. It is good if one does this. As as for the meaning of the great Tantra, one needs to learn about this. But there are some who do not have their continuum ripened through proper initiations and do not even known the number of the commitments. Then, just reciting something that they call a ritual, not having any fixed practices for the rituals, such Tantrikas who claim to be great liberators of oneself and others, these people will not be liberated in this lifetime. Still, at least they should not open the door of the Vajra Hell in their next lifetime. Not being endowed with a compassionate mind to help others, and collecting disciples in order to gain more respect and services, and also, not having cleared their own net of doubts, yet pretending to be great teachers and giving teachings for others, is it not strange that these beings attempt to bring

others to the state of liberation? Please, at least do something so that one will not fall into the lower realms of life. At the beginning, not examining properly the relation between master and teacher, rushing to establish such a relationship in order to obtain something (such as food, clothing, fame, etc.), and then, even for the sake of little things, abandoning one's commitments -- those disciples bring about loss to oneself and to others, by not making offerings to the Guru, and speaking badly in order to bring down one's Guru. Please, don't fill this earth with crazy people with degenerate commitments.

There are those, with a mind to help oneself or one's benefactor (if they are sick), who dig up the earth and engage in other careless conduct, killing gods and demons.[1]

Oh you practitioner of gCod, going from place to place, collect virtue and not any nonvirtue. Please destroy the self-cherishing enemy. Today, in this country of snow mountains, there are a lot of people interested in this practice, who know about it and can teach it to others, but if you look for people who really know the meaning of gCod, they are difficult to find since

[1]These actions of digging up the earth, and so forth would be perhaps to obtain small trees, special earth, etc. for use in rituals. If this is done carelessless it can kill many small animals there, or harm the spirits of the place. Je Tsongkhapa here warns against this practice.

there are so few good teachers. Some are carried away by the fame of the teacher, some are attracted by the teacher's property and wealth; others are carried away by the place, long distance and time it takes to get to the teacher; others are afraid of not having the fortune to get such teachings. Most of the people have jealousy. Although there are many visible gCod practitioners, they are just like drawings;[1] there are very few who actually know the practice.

I have relied upon many learned and accomplished masters, have listened to extensive teachings of Sūtra and Tantra, and especially have trained in this practice of gCod until I really mastered it. So those who have intelligence and no discrimination, who have sincere motivation and who wish to practice the gCod, if you really study this teaching of gCod and then practice it, your thoughts and wishes will be definitely fulfilled.

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[1]This means that they have the appearance of gCod practitioners but they are not the actual practitioners, just like a drawing or photograph may have the appearance of the person but is not the person.

Sources: This profound gCod commentary was composed relying upon the small text of Āryadeva, the work of Phadampa Sangye known as *gcod brul tso drug*, and the *bKa'-tshoms* of Machig Labdron, along with various works by great masters, from which I have gleaned the important points, and put them together here, at the request of many masters who are interested in the teaching. I, bhiksu bLo bzang Kīrti, who have listened to many teachings, composed this text at the great temple of Sang-ngag Khar[1] . May this cut all self-grasping along with its seeds.

[1]This is the monastery of Sang ngag Khar in Dechen, which is just a few kilometers from Ganden monastery, between Ganden and Lhasa. It was a large monastery during Lama Tsongkhapa's time, and he spent much time there. It is at Sang ngag Khar that he received his Geshe degree.

gcod kyi gdams pa thar 'dod kyi ded dpon[1]

The Guide for Those Desiring Liberation

by

Pan chen blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan

Homage to all the Gurus and Ḍākinīs. Here are the holy instructions of the gCod practice.

The lion abides in the snow mountain. Je Rinpoche's (Je Tsongkhapa's) treatises are like the abundant mane of the snow lion. The tent of fiery claws of the lion is the stainless reasoning which has the power to destroy the brains of the crazy elephants who assert substantial existence. Through the high great shouts of Emptiness the views of those foxes who assert true existence of phenomena are destroyed.

Faithfully remembering that Lion of Speech, Losang Dragpa, I am so deeply moved that the hairs of my body raise up, and I shiver.

May all those who practice this gCod prevail, those who dance the dance enjoying the together-born bliss and voidness in the cemetery free of the eight

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[1]In *The Collected Works of bka'chen bzod pa*, Vol. 4, Delhi, Dorjee Tsering, pp. 105-134.

worldly Dharmas, with the sound of Phat which indicates dependent-arising and birthlessness, destroying the brains of the demon of self-grasping.

Just like clouds in the face of a fierce wind, all the external and internal *maras* (demons) are completely destroyed by relying on the practice of gCod. Is there anything else, other than this profound path of gCod, which is the essence of method and wisdom (conventional and ultimate Bodhicitta)?

Therefore, the fortunate ones should enjoy the honey of this most sublime teaching with one-pointed mind, just like a swarm of bees with thousandfold sound.

For those fortunate ones who want to reach the state of Buddhahood, who wish to practise this gCod which is the essence of method and wisdom, here is the explanation in four parts.

1. The place for the practice
2. What kind of person will do this practice
3. The instructions themselves
4. On the basis of one's practice, what kinds of signs and measurements will occur.

1. The Place for the Practice

First, the details (regarding the place) should be learned from (other) texts on gCod. Here I will not elaborate, since it would be too much to write.

2. What kind of person will do this practice

The status of the person who will set forth in this practice: The person should be one who looks at the goodness of existence as a plantain tree (without essence), and should be one who has become a slave of loving kindness and compassion and keeps in mind the full enlightenment of Buddhahood. This gCod is meant for those who wish to detroy the seeds of Samsāra from the roots. Therefore, please understand that having thoughts of receiving offerings, desiring a good reputation and therefore taking interest in performing aggressive acts against worldly gods and demons, are the very opposite of this practice of gCod.

3. The instructions themselves

1. Collect the guests
2. Visualize the objects of refuge

First (Collect the guests): In the space in front is a high and spacious throne, supported by eight great lions, on top of which is a vari/colored lotus with a thousand petals. At its center are lotus and moon cushions, on which is the root Guru inseparable from Machig Labdron. At her heart is the goddess Prajñāpāramitā, above is Buddha Vajradhāra, to her right Yamāntaka, to her left Cakrasamvara, in front Guhyasamāja, and in back, Hevajra, each together with their entourage of deities and palces. Surrounding these, the Gurus of the direct and indirect lineages, deities, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Ḍākas, Ḍākinīs and Dharmapālas. In front of each are their well-spoken Dharma teachings in the form of texts.

Surrounding these, a variety ofvarious incarnations of the Gurus, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, in all directions, and below them, think that all living beings, including those with harmful attitudes, are present.

(Refuge and Generating the Mind of Enlightenment)

I go for refuge to the assembly of root and lineage Gurus,

To the Supreme Captains who lead the fortunate ones to liberation.

I go for refuge to all the *yidams* (meditational deities) and deities through whom come all the holy attainments.

I go for refuge to the fully enlightened Buddhas, the unsurpassed teachers who have completed all abandonment and realization.

I go for refuge to the holy Dharama which is free of deception, the supreme cessation of attachment which is the glory of peace.

I go for refuge to all the Sangha who are the Supreme Assembly, the excellent guides of the virtues at all times.

I go for refuge until complete enlightenment to all the holy, perfect field.

I offer myself properly, humbly, with great respect, to you, Oh Protectors. Please accept me with your great kindness.

(Generate the Mind of Enlightenment -- Bodhicitta)

I generate the mind of supreme Enlightenment, in order to free all living beings who are sunk in the ocean of suffering.

With pure thought, I will train in the activities of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the three times, without becoming discouraged.

(Seven Limbed Puja and Mandala Offering)

Phat. I prostrate with very clear and pure body, speech and mind to the Assembly of Root and Lineage Gurus, to the most supreme Ones, the objects

of refuge, who guide the fortunate ones to liberation, the lamps of the world.

I offer a variety of offerings, both actual and imagined.

I confess all my negativities and downfalls which I have committed since beginningless time.

I rejoice in the merits of ordinary and Ārya (Buddhas and Bodhisattvas) beings, and request them to stay here until the end of existence.

Please turn the wheel of Dharma for the sake of all living beings.

I dedicate all the merit I have accumulated for the sake of all living beings.

(Recite this with full concentration.)

(Special Generation of the Mind:)

For the welfare of all living beings (who have been, are, or will be my mother), may I very quickly attain the state of Guru Buddha. For that purpose, I will practice the very profound essence of gCod.

(Think thus, while reciting either three, seven, or however many times one wishes.)

(Accumulating merit to create the imprints for attaining the common form

body and the uncommon truth body.)

First, regarding the method to accumulate merit, visualization of all living beings as one's father and mother and generating the Mind of Enlightenment, give one's flesh and blood.

Secondly, visualizing all living beings as one's Guru or deity, make offerings of nectar and obtain thus the blessings for various attainments.

1. On the crown of one's head on a lotus and sun disc is in essence one's own Guru, in the form of Machig Labdron, having the aspect of Vajravārāhī with one face and two arms, the right hand in the threatening gesture raised in space, holding a curved knife, and the left hand holding a skullcup full of the blood of evil (one's interferences and enemies), held at the heart. In the crook of her arm a *khatvaṇga*, shoowing a wrathful expression (toward the enemies) and a smiling face (to the practitioners), with slightly bared fangs, three eyes wide open and staring intently, with a headdress of five dried human heads and garland of fifty human heads. She is naked, with loose hair, adorned with five ornaments, in the center of burning brilliance and shining light, like the radiance of 1,000 suns. With the left leg stretched out and the right bent, in a dancing posture. At the crown a white OM, at the throat a red AH, at the heart

a blue HUM, at the navel a yellow SVĀ and at the secret place a green HA with five-colored rays of light emanating from these. From the syllable HUM at the heart of Vajravārāhī above one's crown emanate rays of light, inviting Lady Vajravārāhī, surrounded by the Gurus and Three Jewels, from their natural abodes.

Phat. From the palace of the pure sphere of the Dharmadhatu, with the net of the body[1] (the Sambhogakāya) of the union of wisdom and bliss, of magical manifestation, the powerful Lady of the three places of the Ḍākinīs [2], please come here to this place, out of your love for us.

Om Ah Guru Vajra Sarva Buddha Bodhisattva Ḍākinī Saparivāra Vajra Samadza Dza Hum Bam Ho.

Again, from the syllable HUM at her heart emanate rays of light inviting all the deities in peaceful and wrathful forms, which absrob into Vajravārāhī on one's crown. She becomes the very object of refuge of all holy beings. Again, from the syllable HUM at the heart emanate rays of light in the form of

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[1]This is not a regular 'net' of body which ordinarily comes into existence out of a collection of ignorance and attachment --but a net to rescue all living beings from Samsara, points out the Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche. personal communication, Switzerland, 1986.

[2]These are the places of the body, speeh and mind.

hooks, lassos, bells, binding chains, in immeasurable amounts, going out and bringing in all living beings of the six realms of life, including those with harmful attitudes. All their limbs are bound with chains; they are being hooked at the heart with hooks, bound with lassos around the neck, and controlled (keeping them there) with the sound of the bell. Thus they are all positioned around oneself

(Use the appropriate hand gestures as for *Dza Hum Bam Ho*, but at this time it is slightly different, as this is for the wrathful beings.)

Om Vajra Ah Ku sha Dza Vajra Pasha Hum Vajra Sphotra Bam Vajra Ghandha Ho. (Saying this, think that the whole place is filled with a reddish, purplish color of those guests.)

With very strong motivation of compassion towards all living beings, including the mother sentient beings and demons, all gather together to make the offering of the seven-limbed pūja, with oneself leading the recitation:

"From the Dharmadhatu which is spontaneously existent and free of illusions come the playful activities of the Sambhokaya which are the complete enjoyments of great bliss manifesting in various ways, from which emanates the chief of the Ḍākinīs (Nirmanakaya).

I prostrate to the Lady Vajravārāhī.

In the sphere of the space of Emptiness, clouds of offerings which are produced from uncontaminated bliss in thousands of different sublime forms, I offer everything to you, in order to bring about complete delight.

Whatever mistakes I have committed through the imprints of my ignorance since beginningless time, which have actually been like actions in a dream, since all Dharmas are empty, and, by virtue of that emptiness are as pure as the sky, I confess them all into the sphere of inexpressible Emptiness.

Although in the ultimate meaning, beyond expression and thoughts there is nothing which has the mark of virtue or nonvirtue, in the conventional sense there are dependent arisings which are like the white moon crystal. I rejoice in these virtues, with my pure thought, from the depths of my heart.

In order to show all living beings, including myself, that the excellent completely good path, is just like a pleasant echo, ultimately devoid of true existence, please stay for countless endless ages, as long as the end of existence is not visible.

I dedicate all these heaps of merit which have come out of the play of the union of Emptiness and appearance, in order to attain the state of unification, Vajradhāra, who is the union of bliss and Emptiness, in order to rescue all living beings without any remaining, all those beings who, in reality, have no

true existence."

(Thus, with concentration, offer the seven-limbed prayer.)

From the Lady on the crown of one's head flow streams of nectar and enter the body and mind of all living beings including oneself, purifying all negativities and obscurations, dangers and evils. Then, in the center of one's body, which has become as pure as a crystal bowl, is the central channel, red, the upper part going to the opening of the crown, spreading slightly wider at the top. The lower end goes down slightly below the navel and in the navel center is one's consciousness in the form of an indestructible drop, like a small egg of a small bird, white with a slightly reddish color. Remaining there, with a very strong aspiration to spring upward, recite *Phat*. This reaches the heart. *Phat*, reaches the throat. *Phat*, reaches the crown.

Think that (the consciousness) is there at the crown center. Again, with the motivation to transfer it into the heart center of the Guru, with Phat it enters the heart center of the Lady.

One's body collapses and then, with Phat, from the heart center of the Guru (Vajravārāhī) one's consciousness, in the form of a Ḍākinī, holding a curved knife and skullcup, comes out.

Phat I slit the body with my knife from the crown to the crotch.

Phat From the heart I cut to the tips of the right and left hands.

Phat I cut from the crotch to the tips of the right and left feet.

Phat The skin is peeled off.

(Body Mandala Offering)[1]

(And with full concentration, recite:)

"*Phat* My skin, the great and beautiful golden foundation, is sprinkled with great amounts of nectar of blood and water. The flesh and blood are heaps of flowers. All the limbs become the four great continents, the sub-limbs become the eight sub-continents, of which, in the center, the trunk of the body becomes the great heap of jewels, on top of which, the head is transformed into the victorious palace of Indra. The two eyes become the sun and moon; the heart becomes the wish-fulfilling jewel. All the inner organs become the perfect enjoyments desired by gods and humans.

Phat. As I am offering this pure mandala to you, the oceans of root and lineage Gurus, deities and assembly of gods, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Ḍākas and

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[1]The concept of the body as mandala offering is found in the Prajñāpāramitā literature, particularly in the example of Sadāprarudita. See Edward Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and Its Verse Summary*, San Francisco, Four Seasons Foundation, 1973, pp. 277-300. Also Carol Savvas and Lodro Tulku, *Transformation into the Exalted State: Spiritual Exercises of the Tibetan Tantric Tradition,* Rikon, Tibet Institut, 1987, fn. 4., pp. 187-188.

Ḍākinīs, Dharmapālas, please take them with compassion and grant me your blessings and all attainments."

Then, remaining in great equanimity without discrimination towards any living beings, think in the following way: Since there is no beginning of existence, there is no beginning of one's own birth, and thus, always one has passed into a new life form, continuously. Thus there is no country or place where one has not been born before. Even the times that other beings have been one's mother cannot be counted. And still this is going to be repeated many times. (Thus meditate on living beings as one's mother.)

Furthermore, each life time there is a single being who is one's mother, and all the mothers in the past have taken care of oneself in a similar way. From the time of conception in the womb of the mother, she lovingly takes care of the child. Even if she would have such sufferings that would endanger her own life, those would be easier to bear than even the smallest sickness that her child might have. In short, the mothers have protected me, from all harms and sufferings, according to their own capacity, regardless of their own bad reputation, danger to life, harms and sufferings. Bringing about all possible benefit, they are extremely kind to the child. Thus meditate on their kindness.

What I have mentioned here is just speaking on a rough level, and for

detailed explanation one can learn from the teachings of Je Rinpoche (Tsongkhapa) and his disciples.

And those kind mothers are possessed by the spirits of delusions and as a result their consciousness is not its natural state. The eye of wisdom which discriminates between wholesome and unwholesome is obscured by ignorance. From moment to moment they engage in unwholesome deeds, in samsāra, and step towards the great abyss of the lower realms of life. Who else would liberate them if I do not do it myself? All these mother beings, if they don't place their hopes in me, in who else could they do so? And as for me, from beginningless time to the present, casting aside all you mother living beings such as demons and spirits, etc., I have instead cherished myself. Now, I will cast myself away and cherish these mother living beings. Thinking in this way, I will generate the mind of trying to pay back their kindness, and a loving, caring attitude.

May those beings be parted from suffering, may they be free from suffering. I myself will cause them to be separated from the state of suffering (thus generating the extraordinary attitude of meditation on suffering).

If it would be asked, who would separate these beings from suffering,

and who will endow them with happiness, think, I myself will do so (thus meditating on compassion which is capable of bringing about the extraordinary attitude).

Think: Who would liberate them from the state of suffering and bring beings to the state of free from suffering? I will do this. Thinking in this way is the "extraordinary attitude". In that case, if one asks whether I have that capability or not, it is true that at the moment I do not have that capability. Despite that, I have taken the vow to fulfill this purpose. Who does have that ability? That Guru deity on the crown of my head. And I myself will try to very quickly attain the state of the Guru Buddha in order to help all living beings, including the spirits and demons (Thinking thus, meditate on *bodhicitta*.).

All those who are endowed with special intelligence should cherish these good methods, as taught by Pandit Atiśa and Lord Śāntideva. Otherwise, as Lord Atiśa has said, there are Tibetans who know of so-called "Bodhisattvas" who do not know how to engage in loving kindness and conpassion. It appears to me that, not being able to define properly the differences between loving kindness, compassion and Bodhicitta, and just aspiring to attain a state of Enlightenment for the sake of all living beings, just by word alone, without

paying attention to the meaning, this is mistaken as 'Bodhicitta'.

If I would make a heap of my own flesh and bones, of all the life forms that I have taken from beginningless time, it would be even higher than Mount Meru. Out of those, if I would collect the blood and pus, it would be even greater than the ocean. But in fact, none of these life forms have served the purpose of those mother living beings, including the demons and spirits. Now, this time, on the basis of my present body, I will satisfy these mother father spirits and demons with my own flesh and blood and ultimately I will benefit all living beings. (Think thus, and for that end, request the Guru deity to give blessings. Visualize the Guru and the whole assembly of deities in front of oneself, in their own respective dwelling places, and recite:

*Phat.*I make requests to the great Mother who gives birth to the Buddhas of the three times,

to the supreme guide of living beings, the King of the Sakyas, Śākyamuni,

to the collection of all the wisdom of the Buddhas in one, Mañjuśrī, please bless my mindstream.

To Dampa Sangye, who attained the Supreme Siddhis, whose son Sonam Lama is the source treasure of instructions,

to Dākinī Wangchuk Labdron, the Lady of the Dākinīs, please bless my mindstream.

To Kugom Choseng, the one who is completely free of the eight worldly principles,

to Dolpa Zangthal who has seen the ultimate meaning, free of elaboration,

to Gyanag Cherbu, who manifested a special conduct, please bless my mindstream.

To Sangye Rabten, the one who has elucidated the supreme path, t o Sumpa Rapa (the 3rd Karmapa), who has accomplished the special attainments of bliss and heat, please bless my mindstream.

To Sangya Tenpa, the great leader of the living beings,

to the master Khedrubje, who is completely well-versed in the gCod practices,

to Od-gyal, who has attained the highest, profound realizations,please bless my mindstream.

To Phuntsok Trashi Gyeltsen, who is so much loved, the most glorious teacher,

to Samten Dorje, who achieved the supreme realization of wisdom,

to Nyamme Gyeltsen, the most incomparable one and ornament of the teaching, please bless my mindstream.

To Sherab Druk, the one who is being cared for by the Supreme Guide,

to Longrig Gyatso, the ornament of the learned ones,

to Thubten Namgyal, the refuge of the beings,please bless my mindstream.

To Ensapa Labsang Thongru, the Actual Buddha Vajradhāra

and his son Sangye Yeshe, the root Guru, the learned and accomplished son, who is the most reliable and supreme refuge, please bless my mindstream.

To the root Guru Vajrayogini, who bestows the state of great Bliss of the three bodies merely by remembering her, please bless my mindstream. To the root and lineage Gurus, deities, assemblies of gods, the three Supreme Refuges, Ḍākas, Ḍākinīs, to the ocean-like powerful Dharmapālas, please bless my mindstream.

(Close Lineage)

To the all-pervading Vajradhāra, who has achieved the three bodies of the Buddha in reality,

To the Lady who grants undefiled bliss,

To the Lord who is the source of all wisdom and the Son of all the Buddhas, please bless my mindstream.

To Losang Dragpa, the compassion of all the countless Buddhas combined in the friend of the fortunate beings, endowed with the eight qualities of the Lord, please bless my mindstream.

I make requests to Jampal Gyatso, the second omniscient Buddha,

To Chokyi Gyaltsan, please bless my mindstream.

To Dharmavajra, the one who has attained the Vajra body,

To Losang Thondru, the actual Vajradhāra,

(from here continue as in the long lineage prayer)

Bless me that I can revere the holy teacher properly and to understand that it is difficult to obtain this fully endowed human state, and to know that it is very quickly lost.

Bless me to mentally abandon this life, seeing the situation of existence as a hole inside the earth filled with fire.

Bless me to have the supreme Bodhicitta which exchanges the position of oneself with others.

Bless me to transform this illusory body into food.Bless me to be able to stay alone in haunted places and retreats.

Bless me to pacify the demons into their own place, to practice the *gCod* of method and wisdom, which eliminates the hundreds of mistakes with the wisdom that realises selflessness."

Saying this with very intense visualization, make these requests. From the Lady at the crown of your head comes streams of nectar from her body. Then,

(Mandala Offering)

Phat. The skin is peeled off, reddish in color.

Phat The brain, the fluids and all the refined parts, become extremely vast clouds of offerings such the five desired objects, and so forth.

OM AH HUM

(recite 3 times, thereby blessing the offerings)

"*Phat.* I offer respectfully this undefiled, bliss-producing ocean of beautiful offering substances which arise from emptiness, to the root and lineage Gurus and the Deities, to the assembly of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, to the Ḍākas and Yoginīs, to the ocean-like assembly of Dharmapālas. Please partake of these offerings with compassion."

And then, visualize the three great universes are being filled with flesh, blood,

bones and joints, and invite the guests. That dakini which is one's own consciousness, raises the curved knife and moves it about saying Phat. From the highest peak of existence to the lowest region of the 18 hell realms, those appearing and existing, the eight classes of gods and rakshas, the spirits of the place, the spirits of the body, primarily the 18 chief spirits together as one group, the 15 great spirits of children, the 80,000 classes of interferences and the 360 classes of interfering spirits, and so forth. All the gods and demons, come and gather here. Those spirits rushing about on the three different passes, those who roam about in the three valleys, those four classes of Naga-nyan,[1] the eight classes of swift ones, etc., those 9 great ones, those 9 sensitive groups of gods and rakshas, come and gather here. The group of white gods, the group of red *btsan*, the group of black *maras*, the group of vari-colored *Rāhula*, the group of dark-colored *mu*, the group of cannibal *rakshas*, the group of the treasure holder kings, the group of *mamos* of *Yama*, the group of those earth owners,*nagas* and sensitive spirits, all the gods and spirits belong to those groups, come and gather here. Whenever one goes, they follow, circling over oneself like a blackbird, following after one like a black dog, coiling to one's body like a black snake. At the beginning, bringing illness, in between, causing

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[1]A sub-class of Nāga who particularly enjoy eating flesh and blood.

illness and sickness to remain in the person, and at the end, making the sickness incurable. All those harmful interfering spirits and interferences, come and gather here. In short, underground, on the ground and above the ground, all gods and demons, come and gather here."

"I dedicate this great heap of my illusion-like body, in general to my most kind mother demons and spirits, and to all living beings of the six realms of life. I dedicate this body as a ransom and especially I offer this ransom in place of the glorious, holy Gurus. In short, in order for all living beings to attain the fully enlightened state of Buddha, and especially those mother father demons and spirits, I make offerings to the Three Jewels, the respected guests."

"I make this offering as a thanksgiving to the Lords Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the guests of high qualities."

"I make these offerings as a practice of giving to the guests of compassion of the six realms."

"I make this offering to pay back the debts to those spirits and interferences to whom I am indebted."

"*Phat*. Those of you who enjoy eating flesh, eat flesh."

"Those who enjoy drinking blood, drink blood."

"Those who enjoy taking the skin, then take the skin."

"Those who enjoy taking life and life-holding energies, then take them."

"Those who enjoy taking the radiance, then take the radiance."

"Those who enjoy taking the brilliance then take it."

"Take whatever you like."

"Those who are in a hurry, take it uncooked."

"Those who are not in a hurry, then take it cooked, fried or roasted."

"In whatever way you would enjoy it, then take it in that way."

"*Phat*. The skin which has been cut into pieces, becomes the offering substances of the mundane and supramundane levels. Take the very best of whatever you wish to have. Take them, and then go on to your own places, such as into space, into the depths of the earth, on the peaks of the three mountains, in the depths of the three valleys, in the depths of the rivers and oceans, into the white and red rocks, into the trees and forests, into the marked places, into the temples. Go into the little temples of stones. In short, take all these offerings, whatever they might be, and go to your own places, wherever they might be."

Saying this, you meditate on the nature of Emptiness and genterate the correct view. After arising from that meditation, do the dedication and prayers which are good now and forever.

The Buddha's teaching is like the light of the Sun, which comes through the space. The instructions of the holy beings encircle the Sun with hundreds of decorative rays, causing the lotuses of limitless learned ones to blossom. Here is the well-taught jewel of the space.

The Second (White Offering) has two parts: Visualizing the demons as deities and making offerings of nectar to them to receive the attainments. This is found in most of the *gCod* texts, and is usually known as the **White Offering.** Also, for this practice one should go through the same procedure, beginning with taking refuge and generating the mind of Enlightenment. Then,

On the crown of one's head on seats of lotus and moon, inseparable from one's root Guru is Machig Labdron, in the form of Buddha Ḍākinī, with white body, with a slight shade of reddish color, one face and two arms, the right hand playing a *sengdeng* wood *damaru* with the sound of tro-lo-lo and the left playing a bell made of white silver. Half of her hair is bound with white cloth, and the rest hanging to the waist. With a smiling expression, in the dance posture, wearing clothes of godly materials, having the luminosity of a thousand suns, in the center of blazing and radiant, glorious lights.

Then, recite refuge, generation of the Mind of Enlightenment, etc. up to:

"Bestow on me blessings so that the four maras will cease into their own state".

(Up to that, do as before. Then, with very strong enthusiasm and forceful conviction and with complete concentration, direct one's requests.)

From the body of the Goddess Bhagavati at one's crown flow rays of nectar.

Phat From the heart center of the Guru, comes forth the very nature of one's own consciousness in the form of a Ḍākinī holding a curved knife and skull cup.

Think that all the containers are in the form of divine mansions. The spirits and so on, all the contained, are in the form of gods and goddesses, and mix them with the wisdom beings. One's own body is white and huge and fat, corpulent, greasy and oily (Visualize thus.).

In the front from the syllable YAM comes a wind mandala, from the syllable RAM a fire mandala, out of three syllables AH come three human heads, the size of a mountin. One's consciousness in the form of a Dākinī, sticks the curved knife right between the eyebrows. The skull is taken off and is placed on the tripod of three human heads, red in color, as large as the three

great universes. The body is placed inside, and then chopped into smaller pieces. Then the wind mandala starts to move, the fire mandala burns, and the steam that comes out invites the wisdom nectar of the Tathāgatas, which absorb into the skullcup, purifying all stains. The color, taste and smell become perfect. It becomes a medicinal nectar against all illness. It becomes the deathless nectar of longevity, and the undefiled nectar of wisdom. OM AH HUM. From the tongues of all the guests come rays of light with openings inside, like straws.

Think thus. If you enjoy performing this in a more elaborate way, then here one may do the Ganacakra offering.

Then, the guests delight themselves through generating a special, undefiled bliss in their continuums, and that bliss activates the understanding of Emptiness.

From the five places of the demons and spirits, in the form of deities, come rays of nectar into the five places of oneself, purifying the view and their inprints of holding one's three doors as ordinary, thus attaining the state of the three vajras.

Think thus.

In most of the texts on *gCod*, the correct and incorrect practices are not well distinguished, with the good and the bad mixed up together in one bag, like the *tsampa* (barley meal) of a beggar. Here, I am explaining briefly as an indication for those who are endowed with intelligence and wisdom.

(Second: Making offerings to those demons as deities.)

Then, at the crown of oneself visualised as the deity, in the place of the owner of the family, meditate that all the demons and spirits are the root Guru, surrounding whom are all living beings inseparable from the Gurus of the direct lineage. Then, mix them with the wisdom beings. Make offerings of the seven-limbed *pūja,* including the mandala, make requests and make offerings of the ocean-like nectar, take the four initiations of *samādhi*, and conclude with meditation on Emptiness. All the collected merit should be dedicated for attaining full Enlightenment. These should all be understood as before.

Thus, oneself and others, all phenomena in general, and in particular the three rounds of the offerings are empty of inherent existence. The collecting together of appearance and Emptiness is illusion-like, and this should be understood at all times. At the end, all appearance should be collected into one's heart in the form of light, and one should practice the spacelike meditation

on Emptimess in reality, holding the view firmly that all phenomena are empty of inherent existence. One should remain in this space-like yoga, shich is the combination of Emptiness and appearance.

4. On the basis of one's practice, what kinds of signs and measurement will occur.

One should learn this through the authoritative texts on *gCod*, written by the great beings such as Lodrö Bäpa[1], Panchen Lung rigs rgya mtsho and others and others, as it would be too much to write here.

[1]See blo gros sbas pa (snar-thang pa grags pa dpal), *gcod kyi gdams ngag phul byung gser gyi phreng ba* in *gCod tshogs*, pp. 151-180.

A Concise Instruction of the Very Essence of the Profound gCod

Zab lam gCod kyi snying po mdor sdus nyams su len tshul

by Thu'ukwan blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma

Homage to the Guru Wisdom Ḍākinī, the very source of all attainments and the wish-fulfilling jewel in which all the objects of refuge are combined.

Here are set forth the instructions of the gCod practice.

A yogi who has trained in the common ground[1], and has received the initiation and special oral instructions of gCod, should do this practice in a secluded or haunted (scary) place.

First, one should take refuge and generate the mind of Enlightenment (Bodhicitta).

[One may recite a refuge and enlightenment prayer from another gCod text or any refuge and Bodhicitta prayer. Here they are not listed, but refuge and Bodhicitta prayers should be made.]

Then, recite PHAT and do the following visualization:

PHAT. In the space above on a lotus and moon disc, surrounded by a five-colored aura of rainbow light, is one's kind root Guru inseparable from

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[1]This refers to the training in the Lam Rim.

Machig Labdron. In the form of Buddha Ḍākinī, with a form as white as the moon, a peaceful and smiling expression, one face and two arms. With the right hand, she plays the Sendeng wood damaru, and with the left hand a bell of white silver. Standing with the right leg bent and the left touching the ground, she is adorned with many different jewelled ornaments, and clad in beautiful silk clothes, emanating a white light of happiness and benefit in all ten directions, surrounded by the Ḍākinīs of the four families and countless Gurus of the direct lineage, the meditational deities, and Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Pratyekabuddhas, Śrāvakas and Protectors. She is adorned at the three places with the three Vajras. Emanating rays of light from the Hum at the heart, they invite the wisdom beings. They merge with her and become one.

Again rays of light emanate from her heart center, inviting the living beings of the six realms of life.

(Recite:)

"PHAT

I bow down with great respect with my body, speech and mind.

I offer most perfect, cloudlike offerings.

I confess all negativities, imprints and obscurations.

I rejoice in the virtuous actions of myself and others.

Please turn the profound and extensive wheel of Dharma.

Remain here as long as existence lasts.

I dedicate all the virtues I have collected for the attainment of full Enlightenment for the sake of all mother living beings.

To the holy Guru and the Three Jewels I earnestly pray.

Please look after me with great compassion.

Bless me to remember death and impermanence,

to develop a disgusted attitude towards Samsāra,

to recognize all living beings as my mothers,

and to be well-trained in Bodhicitta.

Bless me to overcome the mistake of self-grasping, which is the source of all sufferings,

And bless me to develop the yoga of the union of method and wisdom.

This human state is definitely going to end soon.

The abyss of the three lower realms is enormous, and

all the goodness of the higher states is unreliable.

Wherever one finds oneself in the three worlds,

one will always be amidst suffering.

All beings are constantly in the state of suffering,

and have again and again been my mother.

They have taken the best care of me.

Now, in order to bring them to the state of Enlightenment,

I will quickly try to attain the fully accomplished state of Buddhahood.

For that purpose, I make an offering of this illusion-like body to the higher and lower level of guests."

At the heart center is one's consciousness, inseparable from a drop of light. Motivated to enter the heart center of the Guru Machig Labdron, recite:

"PHAT. The drop of light reaches the Brahma opening of the crown center.

PHAT. At once this drop enters the heart center of the Guru. The body matter collapses on the ground."

PHAT. One's consciousness again leaves the heart center of the Guru in the form of a Ḍākinī, holding a curved knife and skullcup, and cuts the old body, starting from the heart and cutting to the tips of the limbs. The huge, spacious skin is spread on the ground, and the flesh, blood and bones are arranged on top. Above are a wind and fire mandala, on top of which is a tripod of three human heads. The skull which has been cut from the body is

placed on the tripod. The brains, fluid, and refined substances are put into the skullcup. The wind mandala activates the fire mandala, causing the substances in the skullcup to boil.

Recite "OM AH HUM" three times.

"(The substances) become an ocean of undefiled nectar.

With a mind full of respect, I make this offering to the Guru, Ḍākinīs and the entourage.

PHAT. To the living beings of the six realms of life who are all my mothers, I offer with great compassion, until they are fully satisfied.

PHAT. The remaining flesh, blood and bones fill the space of the three great universes.

PHAT. All the multitudes of spirits and ghosts to whom I am karmically indebted, all of you beings of the six realms who appear and exist, all of you who can be named, come gather here.

PHAT. I make offerings to the guests of Nirvana and Samsāra (the highests level of guests).

I offer as a thanksgiving to the guests of wholesome qualities (the protectors).

I offer this as a gift to the guests of my compassion, the six realms of

living beings.

I make this offering to pay back those spirits to whom I am karmically indebted.

You who are my own kind mothers, eat the flesh, drink the blood, chew the bones.

The lungs, heart, intestines, liver, skin, and so forth, become a variety of offering substances for you all. When you have enjoyed and have been fully contented with receiving everything you have wished for, go back to your own places."

(Then, meditate on the emptiness of the three aspects of the offering:)

(Recite:)

"PHAT. The three aspects of the offering are like appearances in a dream. They do not have even the slightest atom which is truly existent."

"Through the power of the merit accumulated through these virtuous activities which I have done in the past and present or which I will do in the future,

May I become the holy leader and object of refuge for all the countless

living beings who are in need.

May I become the supreme light of the sun which eliminates the sufferings of the cold regions of the hells,

And may I become the cooling rain to protect the beings from the sufferings of extreme heat of the hot regions of the hells.

May I bring about complete relief for all the *pretas* with an ocean-like amount of food and drink of hundreds of different tastes.

May I become the supreme lamp which eliminates the darkness of the ignorance of animals and ends their sufferings due to their exploitation.

May I become a stable ship (for the gods) to cross over the powerfull current of the river of death and the (consequent) fall (into lower rebirth).

May I become an armor to protect against the rain of arrows of sufferings caused by the jealous struggles and fights (of the *asuras*).

May I become the supreme doctor for those who are struck with the horrible epidemics of rebirh, old age, sickness and death, by clearing all the illness of the delusions.

May I myself become the wish-fulfilling treasure for those who are in poverty.

May I become the friend and spiritual guide for those who are suffering

from loneliness and estrangement from friends.

May I, in all my lives in the future, attain this fully endowed human state and may I hold the Spiritual Guide on the crown of my head like the wish-fulfilling jewel.

By entering the ship of hearing, studying and meditation, may I reach the island of the three Bodies of the Buddha."

(Thus reciting the prayers by Panchen Thamchä Khyenpa from the *ritual of the Hundred Torma Offerings.)*

(Colophon:) This practice was written by (Thu'ukhwan) Lobsang Chokyi Nyima, motivated by his own extraordinary thought (to benefit others). This text accords with the texts of the holy masters.

By the power of the wholesome virtue of this composition,

May the darkness of the two obscurations of all living beings be eliminated, and

By the sun and moon of the two bodies of the Buddha,

May this fulfill the purposes of myself and all living beings spontaneously.

gCod sdus pa

A Brief gCod Practice

by dNgul chu Dharmabhadra

Namo Guru Deva Ḍākinīye. (Homage to the Guru deity Ḍākinī).

(Do the refuge and Bodhicitta prayer three times.)

[I take refuge until Enlightenment
in the holy Guru, Buddha, Dharma and Supreme Assembly.
Through the merit I collect by practicing giving and the other perfections,
May I attain Buddhahood in order to benefit all living beings.]

Phat. On the crown of my head is the root Guru inseparable from Vajrayoginī, red in color, with one face and two arms, the right hand holding a curved knife and the left a blood-filled skullcup, with a khatvanga propped against the front shoulder. With a slightly wrathful, slightly passionate expression, three eyes, slight fangs, loose hair, naked but adorned with the six bone ornaments. With right leg extended and left leg bent in the dance posture, on top of a sun cushion and corpse.

In the middle of my (ordinary) body is the central channel, the size of a bamboo stalk, coming from the navel straight up and widening at the crown. In the central channel, in the heart center, is my mind in the form of a drop, blazingly clear white in color, the size of a small pea.

Phat. (The mind) leaves the heart like a shooting star, dissolving into the heart of Ārya Vajrayoginī.

My body falls like a felled tree, completely spread outand covering all the thousand worlds.

Again, my mind leaves the heart of the Guru, as a Ḍākinī holding a curved knife, and cuts the old body from the center of the forehead to the crotch, slicing across the arms and down the legs in a cross, spreading out all the skin, the ground becoming completely red. The torma of flesh and blood fills all the space.

I make offerings to the Three Jewels and all the guests of existence and beyond,

To the guests of wholesome qualities, the meditational deities.

I make thanksgiving offerings to the guests of wholesome qualities, the protectors.

I give to the guests of compassion, the six realms of beings.

I pay back the debt owed to the interfering spirits, interferences and to those to whom I am karmically indebted.

With these offerings of whatever is desired, all the ordinary and Ārya beings are pleased and contented.

The three aspects of the offering are like an illusion. They are empty of true existence, like the appearance of the moon in water.

Phat. I meditate on the one taste, the inseparability of the mind and the Dharmadhātu, having no true existence, free of elaborations, like the spacelike sphere. Thus, whatever merits these aggregates have found through the play of the union of appearance and Emptiness, I dedicate these to reaching the state of the unification Vajradhāra in order to free all living beings (who do not truly exist).

Colophon: This text has been written in accordance with the thought of Panchen blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, by the monk Dharmabhadra. May it benefit others.

Zab lam gCod kyi rnal 'byor dang 'brel ba'i

tshogs mchod 'bul tshul su bkod pa

The Way to Offer the Gaṇacakra in Connection with

the Yoga of the Profound Path of gCod

by Zong Rinpoche bLo bzang rtson 'grus

OM SVASTI

Here is set forth the way to to offer the Gaṇacakra in connection with the Yoga of the Profound Path of gCod in an easy-to-recite way for beginners.

One should know about the place in which to practice, the person who practices, and having done the practice, what changes will occur. One should learn these from the texts and from the oral instructions of the Guru.

As for the instructions:

In one's place of practice, one should have all the materials for the Gaṇacakra (*tshogs*, Offering to the Assembly) arranged and should generate well the motivation (of Bodhicitta).

The way to clearly visualize the objects of refuge:

On a high and spacious throne supported by eight great lions is a vari-colored thousand petaled lotus and moon cushion, upon which sits the Guru

who is inseparable from Machig Labdron. At her heart is the Yum Chenmo. (Mother Prajñāparamita). In front, Buddha Vajradhāra, to the right the deities of Yamāntaka, to the left the deities of Cakrasamvara, in back the deities of Hevajra. Surrounding them are the the root and lineage Gurus, meditational deities, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Ḍākas, Ḍākinīs, and Protectors and Protectresses. In front of each one are all their excellent teachings, in the aspect of texts, and outside of them are various emanations completely pervading the space.

Underneath them are the living beings including those with harmful minds. Then one should think, these demons and interferers, etc. and all living beings are suffering unbearable sufferings of samsāra, and should feel compassion which is unable to stand that they suffer. Then generate the strong conviction that the only ones who are able to protect from that sufferings, are the Three Jewels.

Then play the damaru and bell in 9 beats, twice, while reciting the Gate Gate (the mantra of the Prajñāparamita). Then *Ma gcig lha yi mkha' 'gro* two times, then *chom 'dan 'das* two times, then *ma dang mkha 'gro* two times, then *ma dang* two times.

"*Phat.*"

Then, following the chantleader, ring the bell along with the words. The chantleader begins and then join in the verses, playing the damaru with the *dram dram* beat.

"I take refuge in the assembly of root and lineage Gurus, the supreme captains who lead the fortunate ones to liberation.

I take refuge in all the *yidams* and deities through whom all the holy attainments come.

I take refuge in the fully enlightened Buddhas, the unsurpassed teachers who have completed all abandonment and realization.

I take refuge in the holy Dharma which is free of deception, the supreme cessation of attachment which is the glory of peace.

Recite this verse three times:

I take refuge in all the Sangha who are the Supreme Assembly, the excellent guides of the virtues at all times. I take refuge until complete enlightenment to all the holy, perfect field. I take refuge until I reach the essence of Enlightenment.

I offer myself properly, humbly, with great respect, to you, Oh protectors. Please accept me with your great compassion."

Then, play the bell together with the words and the damaru *dram dram* as above.

"*Phat*. In order to free all living beings who are sunk in the ocean of suffering, I generate the mind of supreme Enlightenment. With pure thought I will train in the activities of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the three times, without becoming discouraged."

(Recite three times, while playing the damaru and the bell in the *ma-dang-lha-yi-mkha-'gro* rhythm).

"*Phat*. On my crown is a lotus and sun disc.

Upon this is (Machig) Labdron, inseparable from by supreme Guru,

in the aspect of Vajra Vārāhī, red in color.

Her right hand holds a curved knife and her left a blood filled skullcup.

Her left arm is adorned with a khatvanga tucked in the crook of the arm,

wrathful but smiling with bared fangs, she is adorned with bone ornaments.

Naked, her hair falling loose, she stands with her right leg bent

And left leg outstretched, in the midst of blazing light.

Her three places are adorned with the three syllables.

Rays of light from the HUM invoke without obstruction Vajra Yogini

(wisdom beings) completely surrounded by hosts of peaceful and wrathful ones

From emptiness, their natural abode. They become inseparable (from Guru Vajra Vārāhī.) Again, rays of red light radiate from the Hum at her heart

to collect under her force the eveil doers, demons, interferers, and all sentient beings of the six realms. They settle around me, just as swans gather to decorate a lotus pond."

(Blow the thighbone trumpet three times. If one visualizes Buddha Dākinī in the assembly field, then change the six lines where is says "Vajra Vārāhī" and so forth, according to the commentary"[1]. Play the damaru in the *dram dram* and *chom-den-dä* rhythms.)

"*Phat*. From the Dharmadhātu which is spontaneous and free of conventional illusions, arise the playful activities of the Sambhogakāya which are the complete enjoyments of great bliss manifesting in various ways, from which comes the chief of the Dākinīs, I prostrate to the Lady Vajravarahi."

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[1]The commentaries list Buddha Dākinī as the main deity visualized. If one wishes to visualize Buddha Dākinī, one needs to change the verses slightly here.

"In the sphere of the space of Emptiness, clouds of offerings which are produced from uncontaminated bliss in thousands of different sublime forms, I offer everything to you in order to bring about complete delight."

"Whatever mistakes I have committed through the imprints of my ignorance since beginningless time, which have actually been like actions in a dream, since all phenomena are empty and therefore by virtue of that emptiness are as pure as the sky, I confess them all into the sphere of inexpressible Emptiness."

"Although in the ultimate meaning, beyond expression and thoughts, there is nothing which has the mark of virtue or nonvirtue, in the conventional sense there are dependent arisings which are like the white moon crystal. I rejoice in these virtues, with my pure thought, from the depths of my heart. In order to show all living beings including myself that the excellent completely good path is just like a pleasant echo, ultimately devoid of true existence, please stay for countless endless ages, as long as the end of existence is not visible."

"I dedicate all these heaps of merit which have arisen from the play of the union of Emptiness and appearance in order to attain the state of unification, Vajradhara, who is the union of bliss and Emptiness, in order to rescue all living beings without any remaining, all those beings who, in reality, have no

true existence."

(Or, in brief[1]:)

"I prostrate to Guru Vajra Vārāhī,

who manifests in an enchanting dancing posture

from the play of the Dharmakāya, the spontaneous great bliss;

who has the glorious qualities and whose beauty captivates the minds of the beings in the three realms.

I present the outer, inner and secret offerings as well as the offering of suchness.

I confess individually all negativities and obscurations of body, speech and mind

And rejoice in the perfectly pure virtues of the three times.

Please turn the wheel of Dharma of the three vehicles for all living beings

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[1]Here, Zong Rinpoche gives the possibility of reciting the shorter version of the seven -limbed prayer, which is found in Phabongkha's *sGyu Lus tshogs su sngo ba*. English transl. by Ven. Lama Thubten Sopa Rinpoche, *Chod: Cutting Off the 'Truly-Existent 'I'*.

And remain in the nature of the three dharmas[1]: permanence (stability and changelessness).

I dedicate all merit towards attaining the state of the three divine bodies."

([While reciting], do the visualization of the streams of nectar.)

Then, to offer the mandala elaborately, visualize one's mind in the aspect of a drop inside one's red central channel. Recite *Phat* four times, visualizing that one dissolves into the heart of the Guru (in the space above). Then, again, visualize that one leaves the heart of the Guru in the aspect of green Karma Dākinī. Recite *Phat* eight times. If one wishes to do this unelaboratedly, it is all right if one does not recite the *Phat*s.

The actual mandala:

"My skin is the great and powerful golden foundation, on which is sprinkled my blood and oils as scented nectar. The intestines are the iron fence, and my limbs, the four continents, in the center of which is my spine transformed into Mount Meru, piled with precious particles.

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[1]This refers to staying in the Sambhogakāya aspect which has permanence, stability and changelessness.

My eyes are the sun and the moon and

My two ears are the umbrella and the victory banner.

My heart is the wish-fulfilling jewel.

My external flesh and internal organs completely transformed become perfect enjoyments desired by gods and humans.

As I am offering this pure mandala, an ocean of whatever is desired,

To you, oceans of gurus, meditational deities, buddhas, bodhisattvas and powerful protectors,

Please accept it with your compassion and

grant me blessings and all attainments.

Idam Guru Ratnam Mandalakam Niryatayami."[1]

In order to purify negativities and obscurations, the stream of nectar from the letter Ah. It is also possible just to recite the close lineage requests, or, if one wishes to do this more extensively with the damaru in the *dram dram* rhythm or in the *chom-den-dă*.

(Damaru *dram dram*)

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[1]Translating from the Sanskrit, "I present this precious mandala offering to the Guru." This is inserted after the recitation of the mandala offering in Tibetan.

"*Phat*. I make requests to the Great Mother Prajñāparamita, in the palace of the Dharmakāya, the stainless sphere,

** Please bless me to cut the self-grasping in my mindstream.

Bless me to train in love, compassion and precious Bodhicitta.

Bless me to quickly attain the path of the supreme great unification Māhamudrā.**

I make requests to the Supreme Leader Lord Śākyamuni, on the Vulture's Peak mountain, **Please bless me to cut the self-grasping in my mindstream (and so forth reciting the following two lines as well to **).

I make requests to the Venerable Ārya Tārā in the palace of the pure land of Yulokö, **..**.

I make requests to the Lord Maitreya in the Pure Land Yiga Chödzin, **..**.

I make requests to the Omniscient Ārya Mañjuśrī in the excellent pure lands of world of the ten directions, **..**.

I make requests to Dākinī Sukhasiddhī in the rainbow light palace, **..**.

I make requests to the Master Asanga on the Indian Mountain of Bya-rkang, **..**.

I make requests to the Second Omniscient One Vasubandhu, in the Nalanda in the centrer of India, **..**.

I make requests to Lopon Āryadeva in the grass hut in India, **..**.

I make requests to the Mahasiddha Phadampa Sangye, in Langkhor of Dingri in Langstod, **..**.

I make requests to Powerful Dākinī Machig Labdron, in the solitary place of Zangs ri mkhar dmar, **..**.

I make requests to the Venerable Khugom Chöseng in the Dhu Monastery of Nyemo, **..**.

I make requests to the Venerable Dolpa Zang thal in the Changra Monastery of Lunmä, **..**.

I make requests to the Venerable Gyanag Cherbu in the supreme place of the Chuwo Mountain, **..**.

I make requests to Venerable Sangye Rabton in the SewäLing Monastery of Ragrong, **..**.

I make requests to the Arhat Sangye Gelong in the mountainside of Zalmo, **..**.

I make requests to the Venerable Third Räpa in the Munkhang Hall of Kharag, **..**.

I make requests to Lord of the Beings, Sangye Tonpa, in the great monastery of Rigong, **..**.

I make requests to the Venerable Khedrup Chöje, in Samling Monastery of Nyangtö, **..**.

I make requests to the Lord Togten Wögyal, in the Phukar Monastery of Lastod, **..**.

I make requests to the Venerable Tashi Gyalten in the Chölung Monastery of the White Mountain, **..**.

I make requests to the Venerable Kunga Yeshe in the Tabu Gyal Monastery, **..**.

I make requests to the Venerable Samten Dorje in the directionless solitary mountain retreat places, **..**.

I make requests to the Unequalled Gyaltsen Palzang in the Gyalchen Pal Monastery, **..**.

I make requests to the Venerable Sherab Drubpa in the Gökhu Pal Monastery, **..**.

I make requests to the Supreme Scholar Lungrig Gyatso in Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, **..**.

I make requests to the Supreme Refuge Thubtan Namgyal in the Riwo Gephel Monastery, **..**.

(From here is the Long Lineage and one should continue from Gyalwa Ensapa down.)

The Close Lineage of the Commentary:

(With the melody and the damaru as played in the previous verses, or for the Close lineage, use the *rang-rta* and play the damaru in the *ma-dang lha-yi-mkha'- 'gro* rhythm.)

"*Phat.*

I make requests to the Lord Vajradhara

in the Dharma Palace of Ogmin,

** Please bless me to cut the self-grasping in my mindstream.

Bless me to train in love, compassion and precious Bodhicitta.

Bless me to quickly attain the path of the supreme great unification Māhamudrā.

Bless me to quickly attain the highest attainment (Enlightenment). **

I make requests to the Bhagavati Vajra Vārāhī in the palace of the Dharmakāya of Great Bliss, **..**.

I make requests to the Lord Mañjuśrī, the great treasure of Omniscience, in the five peaked mountain of China, **.**.

I make requests to the Lord Lobsang Dragpa in the incomparable Virtuous Mountain, **.**.

I make requests to rTogs-ldan 'Jam-dpal rGya-mtsho, in the Pangsa Monastery of Malgro, **..**.

I make requests to Baso Chos kyi rgyal mtshan, in the Spontaneous Great Bliss Abode of Baso, **..**.

I make requests to the Mahāsiddha Chos-kyi rDo-rJe in the abode of the palace of the light of the lotus, **..**.

(Here the two lineages of the commentary join.)

I make requests to Gyalwa Lobsang Dondrub in the Dharma Palace of Ensa, **..**.

I make requests to Khedrub Sangye Yeshe in the Pleasant palace of the three bodies, **..**.

I make requests to Venerable Lobsang Chogyan in the seats of the former Mahāsiddhas, **..**.

I make requests to the Supreme Siddha Lobsang Damcho, in Tashi Hlunpo Monastery, **..**.

I make requests to Venerable Losang Yeshe in the palace of the High Banner, **..**.

I make requests to Venerable Trinle Chophel in the various solitary retreat places, **..**.

I make requests to the Supreme Siddha Lobsang Namgyal in the Virtuous Cave of Kyidrong,**..**.

I make requests to Yongdzin Yeshe Gyaltsan in Tse chol ling Monastery, **..**.

I make requests to Grub-wang Lobsang Chojor in the isolated solitary retreat places, **..**.

I make requests to Duldzin Yeshe Tenzin in the reside of Tsechok Lama (Yeshe Gyaltsan), **..**.

I make requests to the Venerable Thubten Gyatso in the temple of Fasting in Zhide Monastery, **..**.

I make requests to the Spiritual Friend Yeshe Dondrub in Dvags-po Shädrub Ling Dratsang, **..**.

I make requests to Bodhisattva Kalzang Tenzin on the mountain of Yang-dgon Monastery, **..**.

I make requests to Tenzin Khedrub in the solitary place of Hla-ding Mountain, **..**.

I make requests to Venerable Jampel Hlundrub in the Phartsang Retreat, **..**.

I make requests to Kyab-gon Dechen Nyingpo in the Trashi Kyi Ling Monastery, **..**.

I make requests to Mogcho Yeshe Champa in Dechen Monastery, **..**.

I make requests to the Guru Bhagavatī in the inseparable place on the crown of my head, on a lotus and moon seat,

I make requests to the Guru, Yidams, Three Jewels, in the palace of pure appearance,

I make requests to the Ḍākas and Ḍākinīs of the three places in the supreme 24 holy places,

I make requests to the powerful protectors of the Dharma in the palaces of the eight great cemeteries,

I make requests to the Vajra brothers and sisters in the solitary frightening places,

Please bless me to cut the self-grasping in my mindstream.

Bless me to train in love, compassion and precious Bodhicitta.

Bless me to quickly attain the path of the supreme great unification Māhamudrā.

Bless me to quickly attain the highest attainment (Enlightenment)."

Thus, by the power of my very strong, one-pointed requests, from the heart of the Guru deity come forth immeasurable rays of light and nectar, purifying the body and getting rid of all sicknesses, interferences, unwholesome imprints and obscurations, purifying my self-cherishing and self-grasping, filling the body with nectar and light, bringing about an increase of life, merits, wholesome qualities and especially the two levels of Bodhicitta."

[Saying this], from the syllable AH come streams of nectar while one is reciting AH twenty-one times. These prayers should be done very slowly with the visualization of nectar. Play the damaru in the *dam dam* rhythm.

In the center of one's body is the central channel, the size of an arrow. In the center of one's heart is the consciousness in the form of a small drop, very light and ready to spring up through the path of the central channel. It goes to the heart of the central deity, where it is transformed into the state of the Dharmakāya, which is the union of bliss and Emptiness. Reciting *Phat* four times, this transference is done in stages. (With the first *Phat*, from the navel

to the heart, with the second *Phat*, from the heart to the throat, the third *Phat*, throat to the crown , and with the fourth *Phat*, from the crown to the Guru.)

After the consciousness has left the body, the body collapses on the ground.

Again, from the heart of the Guru emanates a Ḍākinī, the form body (of the Guru) hovering like a vulture, and cuts the body. Having cut the body, the Dākinī puts the flesh, blood, and bones into the *kapala* (skuilcup) which is on top of a wind mandala, fire, and human head tripod. After putting the parts of the body in the *kapala*, the Ḍākinī stirs three times clockwise, and the substances transform into oceanlike wisdom nectar, having the qualities of medicine, life-prolonging, and wisdom. Thinking thus, recite OM AH HUM three times, thereby blessing the substances.

Then, the way to bless the container and contained:

(Recite:)

"E MA HO The great play of Wisdom.[1]

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[1]The translation of the following verses, until the "Praisesto Heruka" are from *The Guru Puja*, Dharmasala, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1979, which contains the translation of the First Panchen Lama's *bla ma mchod pa*. Here we have presented parts of these verses using slightly different wording. On the following pages, unless otherwise indicated, the text is taken

All the realms are Vajra realms.

All the abodes are great Vajra palaces.

Oceans of Samantabhādra-like offering clouds arise.

All enjoyments are endowed with the splendour of all that could be wished for.

All beings are actual heroes and heroines.

There does not exist even the concept of "impure" or "mistaken".

Everything is infinitely pure."

(After that, concentrate on all the substances which have been actually arranged for the Gaṇacakra *(tshogs)* offering and play the damaru in the "dram dram" rhythm.)

"HUM. From the state of Dharmakāya in which all mental fabrications are stilled, on top of a turbulent wind and blazing fire is a tripod of three human heads, on top of which is the letter AH. From that AH arises a human skullcup with all the proper characteristics, in which is the syllable OM. From that the substances brilliantly appear one by one. Placed upon them are OM AH HUM,

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from *The Guru Puja,* pp. 24 -39, with the exception of those in in parantheses, which are the additional instructions given by Zong Rinpoche.

each blazing with brilliant color. The wind blows, the fire flares, the substances melt. From their boiling tumble forth copious vapors. From the three letters, profusions of light rays radiate out in ten directions, drawing back the Three Vajras with nectar which dissolve individually into the three letters. These melt into nectar and blend with the substances. (Hum) purifies, (Ah) transforms, and (OM) increases them. E MA HO. They become an ocean shining with the splendors of all that could be wished for."[1]

"OM AH HUM" (three times) (Visualize inviting all the guests for the offering and blow the thighbone trumpet three times. Play the ḍamaru in the "ma-dang-hla-yi khan-dro" rhythm.)

"*Phat*. Oh root and lineage Gurus, Yidams, three jewels of refuge, assembly of Ḍākas, Ḍākinīs, Dharma protectors and guardians, I invite you, compassionate ones, please come here to this place of offering. Please sit here firmly with your glorious body on this jeweled throne in the midst of this ocean of clouds of outer, inner and secret offerings. Please bestow on us, who are striving for the supreme realization, all the wished for attainments."

(Blow the thighbone trumpet 3 times. After that, the offering of

[1]See *The Guru Puja*, p. 27.

Gaṇacakra Tshogs).[1]

"HO. We offer this ocean of tsog offering of uncontaminated nectar blessed by concentration, mantra and hand gestures, in order to please you hosts of root and lineage Gurus.

(Play the damaru in the "ma-dang-khan-dro" rhythm.)

"OM AH HUM. Satisfied with the enjoyments of all these splendors that could be wished for, E MA HO, please let fall a great rain of blessings."

"HO. We offer this ocean of tsog offering of uncontaminated nectar blessed by concentration, mantra and hand gestures, in order to please you hosts of meditational deities together with your entourage.

"OM AH HUM Satisfied with the enjoyments of all these splendors that could be wished for, E MA HO, please let fall a great rain of powerful attainments."

"HO. We offer this ocean of Tsog offering of uncontaminated nectar blessed by concentration, mantra and hand gestures, in order to please you hosts of precious jewels of refuge."

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[1]We have not translated this portion of the text, while it can be found in English translation in *The Guru Puja....*

"OM AH HUM. Satisfied with the enjoyments of all these splendors that could be wished for, E MA HO, please let fall a great rain of sacred Dharma."

"HO. We offer this ocean of Tsog offering of uncontaminated nectar blessed by concentration, mantra and hand gestures, in order to please you hosts of Ḍākinīs and Dharma protectors."

"OM AH HUM. Satisfied with the enjoyments of all these splendors that could be wished for. E MA HO, please let fall a great rain of superior activities."

"HO. This ocean of Tsog offering of uncontaminated nectar blessed by concentration, mantra and hand gestures, we offer in order to please you hosts of sentient beings who have all been our mothers."

"OM AH HUM. Satisfied with the enjoyments of all these splendors that could be wished for, E MA HO, please still the sufferings that arise from deceptive appearances."[1]

(And then, recite:)

Om Guru Buddha Bodhisatta Dharmapāla Saparivāra Ārgham Pādyam Pupe Dhūpe Āloke Gandhe Naividye Shabda Pratītsa Hum Svāhā

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[1]See *The Guru Puja*, pp. 29-31.

Om Guru Bodhisattva Dharmapāla Saparivāra Om Ah Hum

(Thus making the outer and inner offerings.)

[Praises to Heruka][1]

OM I bow to the Bhagavan Lord of the Brave Ones HUM HUM PHAT.

OM to you whose brilliance equals the fire that ends a great aeon HUM HUM PHAT.

OM to you who have an immeasurable, crowning top knot HUM HUM PHAT.

OM to you with bared fangs and a wrathful face HUM HUM PHAT.

OM to you with a thousand arms blazing with light HUM HUM PHAT.

OM to you with a thousand arms blazing with light HUM HUM PHAT.

OM to you who hold an ax, a raised lasso, a spear and a skull staff HUM HUM PHAT.

OM to you who wear a tiger skin cloth HUM HUM PHAT.

OM I bow to you whose great smoke-colored body ends all obstructions HUM HUM PHAT

[Praises to Vajravoginī]

OM I bow to the Bhagavatī Vajravārāhī HUM HUM PHAT

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[1]These 'Praises' and the 'Praises to Vajrayoginī' are not included in *The Guru Puja*.

OM to the Ārya Queen of the Knowledge Ladies who cannot be conquered by the three realms HUM HUM PHAT

OM to you who destroy all fears of evil spirits with your great Vajra HUM HUM PHAT

OM to you who sit on the Vajra throne, the One who cannot be conquered by others, who looks with the wisdom eye.

OM to you whose wrathful body of psychic heat can desiccate Brahma

HUM HUM PHAT.

OM to you who terrifies and dries up the Māras and is victorious over all

HUM HUM PHAT.

OM to you, biting one, paralyzing one, confusing one[1]

HUM HUM PHAT.

OM I bow to Vajravārāhī, the Skygoer, Lady of Desire who abides in union HUM HUM PHAT."[2]

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[1]The meaning here is Homage to you who bites through attachment, paralyzes hatred and confuses ignorance (Venerable Geshe Champa Lodro Rinpoche, personal communication, Switzerland, 1988).

[2]Vajravārāhī abides in union with Cakrasaṁvara and is thus is (Wisdom) always joined with great bliss or is always joined with the wisdom of great bliss.

(Then, if done elaborately:)[1]

(Prayer to See the Beautiful Pure Face of the Sky-Goer.)

"The dramatic play of the bliss and emptiness of all the countless Buddhas

Appears to our eyes as various deceptive visions of Samsāra and Nirvana.

Today, (from among these deceptive visions) I realize you from my heart -- the beautiful, powerful Lady,

Please care for me with the joyful love of your embrace.

You are the simultaneously-born Mother of the Conquerors in the land of Akanistha.

You are the field-born Ḍākinīs in the twenty-four places.

You are the Action Mudras pervading the whole earth.

Oh Venerable Lady, you are the supreme refuge of myself, the Yogi.

You, who are a manifestation of the mind itself.

In the sphere of Eh, in the city of the Vajra, are the actual BAM.

In the land of illusion, you show yourself as a fearsome cannibal

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[1]This prayer is also not included in *The Guru Puja*, but has been added by Ven. Zong Rinpoche.

and as a smiling, vibrant, fair young maiden.

But no matter how much I searched, Oh Noble Lady,

I could not find any certainty of (your being) truly existent.

Then the youth of my mind, exhausted by its fabrications,

took rest in the forest hut which is beyond expression.

How wonderful, please come in your actual form from the Ḍākinī sphere

And care for me by the truth of what it says in the Glorious Heruka, King of Tantras,

That attainments come from reciting the supreme secondary essence Mantra of the Vajra Queen.

At the edge of the forest of Odivisha you cared for Vajra Ghantapada, the powerful Siddha, with the bliss of your kiss and embrace.

Oh, please care for me in the same way.

Just as you led the Venerable Kuṣali directly from the land of the Ganges to the sphere of space,

And just as you cared for the glorious Naropa, please lead me also to the city of the Joyful Ḍākinī.

Through the force of the compassion of my supreme root and lineage

Gurus, the expecially profound and quick path of the ultimate, secret great Tantra,

the especially profound and quick path of the ultimate, secret great Tantra,

and the pure, superior motivation of myself the Yogi,

May I soon behold your smiling face, O Joyful Ḍākinī Lady."

"Oh Venerable Vajrayogini, please lead me and all sentient beings to the Pure Land of the Dākinīs.

Please bestow on us every mundane and supramundane attainment."

(The Karma Vajra prostrates, and then, holding the Tsog-offering substances, recites:)

"E MA HO This great circle of Tsog[1]

Has been the path taken by all the Buddhas of the three times.

It is the source of all the accomplishments.

Oh great heroes and heroines, you should realize this,

And give up all wrong conceptions and enjoy always this Tsog.

A LA LA HO.

(The assembly says:)

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[1]See *The Guru Puja*, p. 25.

OM I visualize myself as a Guru Yidam

With a nature inseparable from the Three Vajras.

AH, this nectar of uncontaminated wisdom

HUM, without wavering from the state of Bodhicitta

I enjoy this Tsog in order to satisfy the deities

residing within my body.

A HO MAHA SUKHA[1]

(Then follows the Spring (Queen) Song[2]. Play the ḍamaru in the "dram dram" and Chom-den-dä rhythms and recite the song. Then, if one wishes to do a special prayer, such as a long life prayer or prayer for protection, etc., then do so here. Then, the offering of the Remainder of the Tsog.)

"HUM Impure deceptive appearances become purified in the sphere of Emptiness.

AH. Great nectar created from Wisdom.

OM. Becomes a great ocean of all desired things.

(Thus reciting three times)

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[1]*The Guru Puja*, p. 31.

[2]This song has been translated in English in *The Guru Puja.* Dharmasala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1979, pp. 32-37.

HO. This ocean of remaining Tsog of uncontaminated nectar blessed by concentration, mantra and hand gestures,

We offer to please you hosts of oath-bound realm protectors.

OM AH HUM. Satisfied with the enjoyments of all these splendors that could be wished for,

E MA HO, please accomplish the virtuous conduct of the yogic path as you have pledged."

HO. By offering this ocean of remaining Tsog to the guests who are left, together witheir entourage,

May the precious teachings proliferate. May the upholders of the teachings, the patrons of the offerings, together with their entrouage, and especially we Yogis and Yoginīs, may we all gain freedom from sickness, a long life, fame, good fortune, and abundant wealth.

Bestow on us the powerful attainments of actions,

such as pacification, increase and so forth,

Oh oath-bound Protectors, protect us.

Help us obtain all powerful attainments.

Make us meet no untimely death, sickness, demons or interfering spirits.

See that we have no bad dreams, ill omens or calamities.

May we have happiness, good crops and harvests.

May the Dharma flourish, may all goodness and joy come about, and may all our minds' wishes be fulfilled."[1]

And by the force of this bountiful giving,

May I become a self-made Buddha for the sake of all beings,

And may I liberate all the multitudes of beings who were not liberated in the past by the previous Buddhas, through my practice of Giving.

All you spirits who abide here on the earth or above the earth, always be loving and show kindness to all living beings.

Day and night do virtuous actions and practice Dharma[2].

By the power of this bountiful giving, may I become a self-made Buddha for the sake of all living beings, and by my generosity may I liberate all the multitude of beings who were not liberated by the Buddhas of the past."[3]

(If you wish to elaborate, then one may perform the giving of Dharma

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[1]*The Guru Puja*, p. 38.

[2]These two lines are not found in *The Guru Puja*.

[3]*The Guru Puja*, pp. 38-39.

here[1] and then, play the ḍamaru "*dram dram* and *chom den dä.*

(Recite:)

"Through this offering, may the guests be satisfied with the non-deluded bliss, may all beings attain the stainless Dharmakāya state, and may one remember the unspeakable, inseparable bliss and Emptiness of the three aspects of the offering."

(Then:)

"PAY The three circles of giving are merely labelled as names and sounds: otherwise, they do not exist from their own side, even so much as a tiny particle. Although all stable and moving phenomena to truly exist. They are empty, like illusions."[2]

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[1]From Phabongkha, *sgyu lus tshogs su sngo ba.* English transl. Ven. Lama Thubten Sopa Rinpoche. *Chod: Cutting Off the Truly Existent 'I',* pp.25-26.

[2]ibid, p. 27.

PHAT PHAT PHAT.

All appearances collect into one's heart in the aspect of light and meditate on the spacelike emptiness with the two or four points, the two being that the appearance is clear and empty, and gaining certainty, with a very strong mind, in the lack of true existence.

Then, after meditation of the lack of inherent existence, do the dedication prayers either extensively or in brief.

(In brief:)

"PAY.[1] Although the nature of phenomena is free of the projection (true existence)

They appear in various aspects as mere labels.

I dedicate whatever is the unification of EVAM -- method and wisdom -

In order to attain the rupakaya and dharmakaya, which are free

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[1]The next seven verses are excerpted by Zong Rinpoche from Phabongkha's *sGyu Lus tshogs su sngo ba*, which has been translated in English by Venerable Lama Thubten Sopa Rinpoche in *Chod: Cutting Off the Truly-Existent 'I'*. Here we have quoted pp. 28-29 of that translation.

obscuration.

May I swiftly cut the root of self-cherishing
With the sharp weapon of the union of method and wisdom.
By keeping purely the moral laws of Shakamuni as the foundation,
Living in solitary places praised by the victorious ones.
May the rocky mountain of the dualitic mind be swiftly destroyed
By proclaiming the dependently-arisen, unborn thunder of PAY
Amidst the gathered clouds of fervent compassion.
And by the great blazing of the fiery meteor of emptiness.
May I swiftly enter the ocean of the three divine bodies,
Not remaining in the wastelands of samsara and nirvana,
By soaring in the space of the great deed of buddhas' children
On the wings of the unified two collections.
May day and night be auspicious, always magnificent,
By having pacified harmful enemies -- spirits and hindrances --
With the blessings of the unsurpassable founder, sublime greatest of the great,
The Victorious One, the sun, lord of dharma.
May day and night be auspicious, always magnificent,

By having pacified the enemy, the tormenting delusions,

With the blessings of the unsurpassable, sublime dharma, the absolute truth,

And the blessings of the truth of holy dharma-nectar.

May day and night be auspicious, always magnificent,

By increasing the collection of virtues free of negativity

With the blessings of the precious qualities of the sangha, who shine gloriously.

And the blessings of the truth of the buddhas' and bodhisattvas' deeds."

If one has generated oneself as Naro Khachö (Vajrayogini in the Naropa tradition), then substitute the verses for Vajravarahi with the verses for Vajrayogini as follows:

" in the aspect of the Lady of the Dākinī Land, red in color, and so forth."

This was written by the Venerable Vajradhāra Zong Rinpoche bLo bzang brTson 'grus in a manner easy to recite.

May all living beings as vast as space follow the supreme Gurus, and, being ripened through the three aspects of the path, may they attain the glorious state free of self-cherishing.

Abbreviations

gCod tshogs: *The Collected Gcod Teachings of the Dge lugs pa Tradition by Ma ti bha dra Kīrti, Blo bzaṅ don ldan and others*. Dharmasala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1986.

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gCod Commentary: dbal maṅ dkon mchog rgyal mtshan. *Zab don snyan brgyud kyi gCod gzhung zab mo gcod kyi man ngag blo gros mig 'byed.* In *The Collected Works of dbal man dkon mchog rGyal mtshan.* Ed. by Gyaltsan Gelek Namgyal. Vol. 3, New Delhi, 1974

gdams ngag mdzod: Unless otherwise indicated, the edition referred to is Koṅ sprul blo-gros mtha'-yas, ed. *gdams ngag mdzod*. Newly edited by H.H. Dingo Chhentse Rimpoche. 18 volumes. Paro, Bhutan: Lama Ngodrup and Sherap Drimey, 1979.

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bar ba grva tshang gi gcod khrid skal ldan 'jug ngogs zhes bya ba thun mon min pa grub mtha' gzhan la gsang ba man ngag gi snying po. In *gCod Tshogs,* pp.49-104.

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VITA SHEET

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